

RISE OF MUSLIMS IN
INDIAN POLITICS

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RISE OF MUSLIMS IN INDIAN POLITICS

AN ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENTS FROM 1885 TO 1906

RAFIQ ZAKARIA

With a Foreword by

THE HON'BLE MR. Y. B. CHAVAN

Home Minister of India

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TO

*Those who had nothing to do
with the past, but look hopefully
to the future*

My country
is not
yesterday.
My country
is
tomorrow.

—*Romain Rolland*

Foreword

Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics by Dr. Rafiq Zakaria provides an incisive insight into the factors that influenced and moulded the contribution of the Muslims to the national political forces in their formative years during the two decades prior to 1906. In retrospect, it is clear that some of the influences described in this book were responsible both for the strength and weaknesses in the role played by the community in the course of the freedom struggle. The history of our freedom struggle is, in a sense, too near us to be understood in proper perspective. Even so, it is time to re-evaluate our history during the later stages of British Rule in order to gain insight into some basic questions. What events carry significance in the development of political consciousness of minorities and how were they inter-related? Was the leadership that guided the community during the period adequate for the role cast upon it? How did the different communities come to accumulate such hopes and fears about themselves and in relation to other communities that influenced their decisions? A series of intensive studies on these issues are essential in order to illuminate the

formative stages of our freedom struggle. They are equally relevant to some of the practical problems we face today.

In my opinion, four elements seem to stand out as decisive factors in influencing the role of Muslims in Indian politics during the period covered by this study: the nature of the leadership within the community; the difference in the response among Hindus and Muslims to opportunities for educational advancement; the pace and direction of reforms in the social structure of the community; and, finally, the effect of communal conflicts. On each of these, the insights provided by the book add considerably to our understanding of the problem.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, whose career, interests and achievements are fully covered in the book, was an eminent leader by any standards. As a pioneer in laying the foundation of modern educational avenues for his community, Sir Syed rendered notable service in opening up his community to the winds of change of modern education and thus prevented it from becoming inward-looking. He had counterparts engaged during the same period in similar tasks for the Hindus also. The author has, however, clearly brought out the implications behind the differences in the character of education imparted to the two communities which, in turn, largely determined their response to social and political issues of the age. As was inevitable, these differences led to considerable misunderstanding between Hindus and Muslims, which the foreign rulers found it convenient to exploit for their own purposes. A truly modern, non-sectarian and liberalising educational endeavour could perhaps have removed a large part of this mistrust.

Dr. Zakaria has documented detailed data from a variety of sources to pinpoint the lagging educational and employment opportunities for Muslims during the period, and their proportionately lower representation in participatory institutions. In the event, the gap could not be made up, as some leaders of the community seemed to have believed, through devices or procedures based on separate electorates or special concessions. For, such devices merely strengthened the separateness of identity of the community at a time, when there was so much to be gained by forging a broader unity of purpose with all other communities. As the author has rightly stated the accumulative result of such approaches even though attractive in the short

run tended to perpetuate the division between Hindus and Muslims, which resulted in the isolation of the Muslims from the main stream of national life. Temporarily the Muslims benefited here and there but as the author rightly points out, by quoting the relevant data, "that, in the final analysis, they lost much more than they had gained".

Forces working for social reforms both among Hindus and Muslims were indeed dominant towards the latter half of the last century. In varying degrees, both reform movements met with resistance from conservative elements in their community, though, with greater success of these movements, both communities could have played a more decisive role in the struggle against foreign rule. Social reform among old communities like the Hindus or Muslims is admittedly a slow process and has to reckon with practical realities. But this precisely was the test of the leadership. It will have to be acknowledged that the social reformers achieved significant successes in their endeavours, though the degree of success again differed between one community and another.

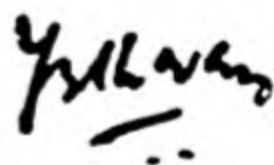
Due to all these factors, the social distance between Hindus and Muslims tended to increase and also resulted in occasional communal conflicts during these two decades. It is indeed interesting to notice the familiar attributes of all such conflicts: the role of exaggerated rumours and false reports; embittered feelings over economic opportunities converted into religious fanaticism; and politics based on religious revivalism. All these trends, noticed at the turn of the last century persist, to some extent, even to this day. Commissions of inquiry into communal riots have established the existence of latent hostility and distrust between communities getting aggravated from time to time into open explosions of violence, quite often triggered off by the most trivial incidents.

It is undoubtedly a misfortune that even after 22 years of independence, there is still distrust and fear between the Hindus and Muslims. The persistent communal tension and the resultant conflicts between these communities is the most serious challenge that we face today. In a sense our survival as a nation depends on how effectively we meet this threat. Mere administrative action either to prevent or quell such conflicts will not attend to the underlying malice. Its basic treatment, and the

sustaining healing touch to the body politic, will be to deal with the fundamental causes which give rise to these attitudes of distrust and fear and accentuate them further. To my mind, the abiding value of a book of this nature would be in helping to create greater understanding of the attitudes and responses of the two communities and the historical causative links therein. Our fight against communal separatism should be firmly anchored around certain basic convictions. First, the basis of Indian citizenship must be clearly understood. There are no preferred citizens of one kind or another and no one caste, creed or community can profess to be more patriotic than the other. Indian citizenship is essentially based on common rights and common obligations. Any dilution or modification of this basic precept would undermine the very tenets of our Constitution. Secondly, the economic development of the country must ensure a fair distribution of its benefits amongst all sections of the people; and finally, a national political consensus has to be built up firmly against the communalisation of politics. Our Constitution has indeed been built around these salutary principles.

On vital issues like nation-building, prescriptions will of course vary as to the courses to be adopted. But before we prescribe, we must have facts, impartially stated, scrupulously documented and rendered in proper perspective. I commend this book as a successful attempt by all these criteria. I am confident that Dr. Zakaria's contribution would not only earn the recognition that it richly deserves but would also inspire many others to undertake similar studies in respect of subsequent periods of our modern history.

New Delhi,
May 4, 1970.



(Y. B. CHAVAN)

Preface

This book is based on the research that I did for my degree of Ph.D. of the London University; it all started during the discussions I had, in the gloomy atmosphere of the "buz bombs" in London in 1944, with Professor Harold Laski, who was a great source of inspiration for the Indian students in the forties. He goaded me to undertake the work. I was fortunate in having the guidance of Professor H. H. Dodwell, General Editor of the six-volume *Cambridge History of India*. It was under his direction that I started the research and after his death, almost a year later, I had the benefit of the guidance by Professor (now Sir) C. H. Philips, who is presently the Director of the London School of Oriental and African Studies. My thesis was approved by the London University in 1948 on the recommendation of a board of examiners, consisting of the late Sir Reginald Coupland, the famous historian, who had been a member of the Cripps Mission to India in 1942 and a Professor of History at the Oxford University, Dr. Vera Anstey, the eminent economist and a Professor of the London School of Economics and my tutor, Professor Philips.

It is generally believed that there was little, if any, political activity among the Muslims before the birth of the All-India Muslim League; this work was undertaken with a view to find out the truth.

At first I thought that, apart from official records and contemporary works, there would be little to help me in the matter; I was, however, amazed at the voluminous material in the form of either Parliamentary papers, reports, proceedings or pamphlets of the various associations, available at the India Office Library and the British Museum. The newspapers and periodicals were also a great help. In those days newspapers did not summarise speeches and statements; they gave them in full. In periodicals and journals great care was taken by the writers to be as comprehensive as possible and often, accurate. All these factors made my task much easier, though, by no means, any the less laborious.

This book is not exactly the thesis as presented to the London University; the material is, no doubt, the same but the presentation has been considerably simplified and made more readable for the general public. All through my attempt has been to give an objective, dispassionate analysis of the currents and cross-currents of Indian politics during its most formative period—the period, which began with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and ended with the founding of the All-India Muslim League in 1906. In fact these twenty-one years have turned out to be the most crucial period in modern India for it can safely be asserted now that the father of Muslim “nationhood” was not Mr. Jinnah but Sir Syed; that all the arguments that Mr. Jinnah later advanced for partitioning the sub-continent were not only the same, which Sir Syed used while opposing the Congress, but were apparently copied from the latter’s utterances because even the words used by Mr. Jinnah are, at places, the same as in Sir Syed’s speeches and writings. Moreover, the controversies and the conflicts, which engulfed the Indian political arena from 1937 to 1947, had their origin in the period under review (1885-1906). Is it not amazing that so little progress could be made towards their resolution in more than half a century’s struggle against the British? The same controversies and conflicts, which dominated this period, continued to plague us right upto the end of the

British rule. The price we paid was the partition of India. But even this terrible price did not solve the problem; it has only added to our bitterness.

Despite more than two decades, the two religious groups, either in India or Pakistan, are yet to adjust their relations—the creation of Pakistan to my mind has only given a further edge to the old feud—and, if this book helps, even in a small measure, towards removing the cobwebs of suspicions and fears. and in creating better understanding between the two communities, I shall be amply rewarded for my humble effort.

I am grateful to India's Home Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, for contributing a foreword to this book. He has not only been forthright in exposing communalism in the clearest terms but a tower of strength to the Government in the fight for secularism. He is an intellectual, who strayed into politics. His views, besides being thought-provoking, deserve our respect and consideration for Mr. Chavan is directly in charge of our internal affairs.

A word about transliteration. I have tried to follow the accepted rules except in the case of names of persons and places, where I have followed the common usage. However all through this work the words "Muslim", "Musalman" and "Muham-madan" have been spelt as quoted; with some other words also a similar step had to be taken in order to avoid confusion in the mind of the reader.

My thanks are due to Mr. S. Y. P. Quadri, who typed the manuscript and to Mr. B. H. Pujar, who prepared the index.

In bibliography English and Urdu works have been listed together; however, in the case of Urdu works, a brief description of the contents is given.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to Professor C. H. Philips for the guidance he gave me in this work.

RAFIQ ZAKARIA

*Bombay,
May 10, 1970.*

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CHAPTER ONE

A Background

1857-1885

SINCE the days of Muhammad bin Qasim, who invaded Sind in 712, the Muslims have been a part of India, at first small in numbers but gradually gathering more and more strength. Their conquests and kingdoms have influenced the course of Indian history; so have their culture and civilisation. They gave a new vigour and richness to Indian life; they added to the treasures of Indian thought. But after the fall of the Mughals, the Muslims ceased to be a dynamic force in India. They rested too much on the past glory of their rulers, became inactive and decadent. Nor did the petty Muslim states, which sprang up on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, have anything creative to offer. The Muslims lost political power; but with it they also lost much of their zest for living. Farquhar is not

far wrong when he says: "The whole community sank with the Empire."¹

How soon this degeneration had overwhelmed the Muslims is seen in an elegy, composed in Persian, by Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor himself, immediately after he was deprived of his eyesight in 1788. Some of its verses run:

Time was, O King! when clothed in power supreme,
Thy voice was heard, and nations hail'd the theme;
Now sad reverse—for sordid lust of gold,
By traitorous wiles—thy throne and Empire sold.

But stay! my soul, unworthy rage disown;
Learn to sustain the loss of sight and throne.
Learn that imperial pride, and star-clad power
Are but the fleeting pageants of an hour.²

This mood prevailed among the Muslims for about a hundred years after the fall of the Mughals and they continued, during all that period, to suffer the pangs of subjugation. Of course occasionally, here and there, they revolted against the British for having usurped their place in India, but that made the situation still worse. Mostly they sighed, as Sleeman explained, for "the restoration of the old Muhammadan regime",³ not from any particular attachment to the descendants of Timur but because "it would give them all the offices in a country where office is everything".⁴

But it was not only the desire for office that made them cherish recollections of Muslim rule in India; they also believed that they were the aristocracy of the country. Sleeman found this feeling so prevalent among the Muslims during his tour of India in 1835-36 that it was difficult for him to convince those with whom he came in contact of the change in status that had come about as a result of the British supremacy. In any event, whether they really were the privileged ones under the Mughals or not did not matter; they persuaded themselves and their children to believe that they were. Sleeman describes this trait

¹ Farquhar: *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 91.

² The poem has been translated by Captain W. Franklin and published as an appendix to his *History of the Reign of Shah Aulum*.

³ Sleeman: *Rambles and Recollections*, II, 182.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 183.

in them as "a very common and very innocent sort of vanity". "We often find Englishmen in India", he explains, "and I suppose in all the rest of our foreign settlements, sporting high Tory opinions and feelings, merely with a view to have it supposed that their families are, or at some time were, among the aristocracy of the land".⁵

Under a foreign rule this attitude did not, indeed could not, help the Muslims; it only added to their decadence. In the famous outbreak of 1857, however, they tried to come into their own again but this time not only in a new role but also in a different context.

In this chapter I have attempted an analysis of their comeback as well as the consequences that followed it. My aim has been to find out, first, what effect the administrative and social changes, brought about by the British, had on the Muslims; secondly, the reactions of the Muslims to those changes; and thirdly, their struggle to readjust their community to the changed environment.

It is now a well-established fact that, from the beginning of their supremacy in India, the British did not trust the Muslims. In their natural frustration, the new rulers saw, sometimes rightly but often without justification, signs of plots to overthrow the East India Company's authority in India. Many of its foremost administrators regarded the Muslims as dangerous to British imperial possessions; while some of them had even developed a repulsion towards them. "These Musalmans," wrote Robert Clive in a letter to Lawrence Sullivan on December 30, 1758, "gratitude they have none; base men of very narrow conceptions, . . . [they] have adopted a system of politics more peculiar to this country than any other: viz. to attempt anything by treachery rather than force".⁶

From Clive to Lord Hastings is a far cry, the period covering no less than fifty years. All through that time British rule went on expanding and strengthening; and still the old fears and suspicions against the Muslims continued. Even Heber, who had such admiration for the culture and character of the Muslims,⁷ believed that "if a fair opportunity offered, the Musalmans,

⁵ Ibid., II, 184. ⁶ Forest: *Life of Clive*, II, 120.

⁷ Heber: *Narrative of a Journey*, I, 177; II, 13, 17, 385.

more particularly, would gladly avail themselves [of it] to rise against us".⁸ For this he blamed no less the conduct of Hastings in his dealings with the old Emperor of Delhi and the King of Oudh.⁹ Hastings' behaviour was, however, no worse than that of others; his successor Lord Amherst behaving no better. It was, in fact, typical of the whole British approach towards the Muslims and their princes. Henry Martin tried to give it a Christian touch when, in spiritual anguish, he wrote that "human nature in its worst appearances is a Muhammadan" and prayed that "Yet, oh may I so realise the day of judgement that I may now pity and pray for those whom I shall then see overwhelmed with consternation and ruin."¹⁰

This approach reached a climax when Lord Ellenborough became Governor-General in 1842. He not only had a soft corner for the Hindus; he made no secret of his contempt for the Muslims. For instance, while restoring the gates of the Temple of Somanath, which was sacked by Mahmud of Ghazna, he proclaimed to the Hindu Princes and Chiefs that "the insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged".¹¹ His Lordship's Address was couched in such melodramatic terms that the Duke of Wellington styled it "a song of triumph".¹² Ellenborough also wanted the Mughal Emperor and his family to quit the imperial palace and resign all titles and privileges, which could be offered to the Queen who would then be called "Padshah Ghazi".¹³ He believed that the best way of restoring "equilibrium between the two religions" was to bring "the Muhammadans to their senses".¹⁴ During those days it did not take long for a Governor-General in India to bring any people "to their senses", whatever be the motive.

Nor was Lord Dalhousie, who played such a decisive role in the annals of British administration in India, any better disposed towards the Muslims. In a private letter to one of his friends on August 18, 1853, he revealed his mind in a significant passage:

⁸ Ibid., I, 298. ⁹ Ibid. ¹⁰ Henry Martin: *Journal*, II, 32.

¹¹ Quoted by Thompson and Garratt in *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, 353.

¹² Quoted by Curzon in his *British Government in India*, II, 199.

¹³ Durand: *Life of Sir H. Durand*, I, 84.

¹⁴ Law, Sir Alganon (edited): *India under Lord Ellenborough*, 65.

The King of Oudh seems disposed to be bumptious. I wish he would be. To swallow him before I go would give me satisfaction. The old King of Delhi is dying. If it had not been for the effete folly of the Court [of Directors] I would have ended with him the dynasty of Timour.¹⁵

But no one has perhaps expressed more eloquently the British feelings towards the Muslims at this time than the *Friend of India*—the predecessor of the present *Statesman*—in its editorial entitled "The Centenary of Plassey", which appeared just on the outbreak of the rebellion of 1857:

It is a great claim in some instances to trample out a nationality; to strangle in infancy what might have grown to be one of the fairest births of time; but except in the case of the Sikhs there is no example of the kind to be alleged against our countrymen. The Musalman power was effete long before the battle of Plassey, and such as Clive found the Muham-madans in the days of Siraj-ud Daula we encounter them in the time of the deposed King of Oudh. Cruel, sensual and intolerant, they are unfit to rule and unwilling to serve. Claiming to exercise sway as of Divine right and yet, destitute of every gift with which nature has endowed the races meant by destiny to dominate over the world, they fell by necessity under the power of a nation replete with energy and resolution, and loathe with all the bitterness of hate the infidels who have subdued them. They will never tolerate our gifts or forgive our supremacy. We may lead them with blessings but the rewards will be curses. We stand between them and a fancied earthly paradise, and are not classed in their list of good angels.¹⁶

For the Muslims, therefore, the rebellion of 1857 was not just a revolt against the British; it was their last desperate bid for the recovery of their privileges. At this time they numbered about 50 millions in India but were without leadership and organisation. Most of them had become paupers; while their Emperor Bahadur Shah led an impotent existence in Delhi.

¹⁵ Dalhousie, in a letter on August 16, 1853. See *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, 262.

¹⁶ *The Friend of India*, June 25, 1857.

They detested the Cross because it had replaced the Crescent. To quote Sir S. H. Cunningham: "The Musalman had a personal grievance. He was feeling the dual pain of humiliated authority and tarnished prestige."¹⁷

But the Muslims' share in the rebellion itself was no greater than that of the others, though their display of sentiments might have been more open, especially as the Mughal Emperor was made the symbol of all defiance during those critical days.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the Muslims had to suffer more because the British suspected them the most. As Sir George Campbell admitted in a letter to *The Times*, London, "the most obvious, popular and pressing theory is that the Muhammadans have rebelled",¹⁹ though his own conclusions, as he pointed out, were contrary to the established belief.²⁰

Campbell's was, however, a voice in the wilderness. He had not realised how deep was the hatred of his countrymen against the Muslims. "Our antagonism to the followers of Muhammad", wrote Russell to *The Times* no sooner the rebellion was suppressed, "is far stronger than that between us and the worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu. They are unquestionably more dangerous to our rule. . . . If we could eradicate the traditions and destroy the temples of Muhammad by one vigorous effort

¹⁷ Cunningham: *Earl Canning*, 65.

¹⁸ John Lawrence says that it was when the Muslim sepoys "saw that the Mutiny might be expanded into a political movement calculated to subserve Musalman interests, they sedulously fanned the flame." See *Parl. Papers*, XXXV, Sess. 2 (1859), 334-36. Also according to Major G. F. MacMunn "the mutineers, largely Hindu soldiers from Oudh, proclaimed the re-incarnation of the Mogul Empire, compelling the aged pantaloon Bahadur Shah, son of blind Shah Alam, to pose as Emperor of India." See MacMunn's *The Armies of India*, 97.

¹⁹ Campbell: *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, II, 391-402.

²⁰ "On no question have I longer pondered, on none have I longer sought for evidence. I have now exhausted every source of evidence open to me, and I have not only come to the conclusion that the case against the Muhammadans has been greatly exaggerated, which I have long suspected, but am now, contrary to my first expectation, convinced that the accusation against the Muhammadans in general is absolutely unjust—that there has been no general Muhammadan movement in India whatever." *Ibid.*, 392-93. Also see on this matter T. Rice Holmes: *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, 44, 143, 185.

it would indeed be well for the Christian faith and for the British rule".²¹

This hatred of the Muslims among British officials especially was so intense that, according to Russell, it was warmly urged by some of them that the Jama Masjid at Delhi should be destroyed as a reminder to the "Faithful" of their humiliated position in India. One Governor-General—Russell called him "enlightened"²²—had even proposed that "we should pull down the Taj at Agra and sell the blocks of marble".²³

After the revolt of 1857 the situation became still worse. Lord Roberts' attitude was typical of the British. He felt so furious with the Muslims that in one of his letters to his sister, Harriet, he wrote that the British should "work with their life's best blood . . . and show these rascally Musalmans that with God's help Englishmen will still be the masters of India."²⁴ To perpetuate and strengthen English dominion in India it was thought necessary by the British to keep the Muslims under foot; the revolt appeared to justify this.

Thereafter, it became almost a habit with British officials to put the blame for everything that went wrong on the Muslims.²⁵ They were not happy to see them in administrative jobs and often treated them with contempt and ridicule. Towards the Hindus, on the contrary, their attitude was generous and they employed them willingly in junior administrative posts, where they co-operated with their superiors wholeheartedly²⁶ and even gave them complete submission.²⁷

The Muslims, on the other hand, "forfeited", as Sir Alfred Lyall has explained, "the confidence of their foreign rulers",

²¹ Russell: *My Diary in India*, II, 74.

²² Supposed to be Lord William Bentinck.

²³ Russell, *Ibid.*, II, 73.

²⁴ Roberts: *Letters Written during the Indian Mutiny*, 119.

²⁵ See a pamphlet issued from London in 1857 entitled *What shall we do with the Musalmans*.

²⁶ G. O. Trevelyan also tells us how, while there was among "the entire mass of our countrymen . . . ironical sneers about the 'mild Hindu' " there were "invectives against the treacherous, blood-thirsty Musalman". See his *The Competition Wallah*, 306.

²⁷ *The Bombay Gazette*, February 16, 1874.

and consequently "lost their numerical majority in the higher subordinate ranks of the civil and military services".²⁸

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan—about whom I shall have to say much in the succeeding chapters—was so much moved by this hostility on the part of the British officials towards his "brethren-in-Islam" that he published in 1860 a pamphlet to try and change the British attitude towards them. He wrote it in Urdu and got it translated into English, sending copies of it not only to British administrators in India but also to M.P.s and officials in Whitehall. He entitled it *The Loyal Muhammadans of India*. The title explains the subject of the pamphlet, which contained copious accounts of Muslim loyalty during the revolt of 1857.²⁹ At one place, referring to the prevalent belief that the Muslims were the chief instigators of that rebellion, he said: "Some of the acts of that horrible drama have already been exposed, but as day by day all the particulars are gradually brought to light, then, when the naked truth stands revealed, will this glorious fact stand out in prominent relief to the world that if in India there was one class of people above every other, who, from the principles of their religion, from habits and associations, and from kindred disposition, were bound with Christians, in their dread hour of trial and danger, in the bonds of amity and friendship, then those people were the Muslims, and they alone! And then will be effectually silenced the tongue of slander now so loud in the condemnation of the Muslims."³⁰ That tongue was, no doubt, silenced but it took a long time and all the energies of the Syed and his companions.

Against such a bleak background the Muslims began their struggle for survival under the British. They were not only distrusted by the ruling power; they were also disliked by the Hindus, particularly their rising middle-class. For this, however, the Muslims were no less to be blamed. Though physically dispossessed and shorn of power, many of their nobles often behaved like the old Bourbons, learning nothing and forgetting

²⁸ Quoted by Sir Verney Lovett in his, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, 15.

²⁹ Also see *The Mutinies and the People*. In the "list of persons rewarded for acts of loyalty" given in this book many Muslim names are to be found.

³⁰ Sir Syed: *The Loyal Muhammadans of India*, Part 1, 3.

nothing.³¹ Their only consolation was in their belief that "*Pidram sultan bud*"—My father was a king. They continued to style themselves, as Heber describes, in typical Oriental terminology, as "the 'Lions of War', 'Prudent and Valiant Lords', 'Pillars of the Council', 'Swords of Battle'"; and this when many of them, having no hope of advancement either in the army or the state, sank into "sots" or kindled into "dacoits and rebels".³²

In every official move for public welfare these Muslims saw some evil device, designed for their spiritual pollution. They looked down upon the Hindus as if the latter were still under some Muslim monarch. This attitude of self-deception brought upon them disastrous consequences. The alien Government went ahead with its plans, contemptuous of their opposition; while the Hindus made the most of every opportunity, in a way glad that the Muslims had left them with an open field.

The pathetic stage to which all this led the Muslims is beautifully described by Maulana Hali in his famous *Musaddas*, which Grahame Bailey has rightly called "The greatest Urdu poem since the time of Anis":³³

Nothing remains of that proud fold but this
That we still give ourselves the Muslim name
For otherwise within our veins and blood
In our intentions and search for truth
Our hearts and minds and thoughts and tongue and speech

Our nature, habits, dispositions too,
Remains there nought of old nobility,
Or if there be, it is by chance alone.

For now, our every deed ignoble shows,
Our actions are the meanest of the low
The fair name of our fathers is eclipsed
Our very steps disgrace the place we dwell

³¹ For a graphic account of the life led by the Muslim gentry just after the revolt of 1857, see Nazir Ahmad's well-known novel, *Mirat ul Arus*.

³² In a letter to the Rt. Hon. W. Williams Wynn from Dacca dated July 13, 1824.

Heber: *Journal*, II, 340-41.

³³ T. Grahame Bailey: *A History of Urdu Literature*, 96.

Dishonoured is the honour of the past,
Arabia's greatness sunk beyond recall.³⁴

The state of affairs among the Muslims was indeed so corrupt and degrading at this time that, at another place, with a note of deep pessimism, Hali sings:

If you would see the limits to which Decline can go—
Regard the lot of Islam—that proud head fallen low—
And, seeing, who would credit that every tide must turn?
That so complete an ebb-tide will turn again?³⁵

This was not only the poet's feeling; a large majority of the Muslims was similarly becoming reconciled to their degraded position. They used to believe sincerely that, as with an individual, who from a child grows into a young and healthy man and then becomes old and dies, so with a people. The Muslims had their days of youth and glory; they were now old and must die soon. That, according to them, was the law of nature, inexorable and immutable.³⁶ As a man in his old age lives on the happy recollection of his youth, so did they as a people.

This attitude gradually assumed alarming proportions; it was not only proving fatal to the Muslims but dangerous to the proper working of administration itself, especially because one section of the Indian people was advancing and the other decaying. The first among the British rulers to realise the seriousness of this situation was the Earl of Mayo. Consequently, under his direction, the Government of India issued a Resolution on the condition of the Muhammadan population in the matter of education, in which, after regretting that so large and important a section should anywhere stand aloof from active co-operation with the educational system, and lose the advantages, both material and social, which the other subjects of the Empire enjoyed, His Excellency in Council directed that further and more systematic encouragement should be given to the Muslims.

³⁴ From the *Musaddas-e-Hali*. English renderings of the above verses by T. Grahame Bailey. Ibid., 95.

³⁵ From the *Rub'iyat-e-Hali*. English renderings of the above verses by S. S. Tute in his, *The Quartrains of Hali*, 65-66.

³⁶ See Sir Syed's unfinished article, written just before his death and published posthumously under the heading "Life and Death of a Nation" in the Urdu monthly magazine, *Maarif*, December 1898.

He also asked the Local Governments and Administrators to report on this subject.³⁷ Their reports were then reviewed by the Government of India in its Resolution³⁸ dated June 13, 1873, in which, after analysing the various causes of Muslim backwardness, the Governor-General-in-Council assumed that in all provinces where the Muslims were few, and often exposed to all the disadvantages which affected a religious minority without wealth or superior influence, it would be the special care of Government to satisfy themselves that these endeavours to encourage the education of the Muslims would be persistently maintained. It was recognised as a paramount duty of an Imperial Department thus to fill up the gaps in the ranks of elementary education, and to range the various divisions of the vast population in one advancing line of even progress.

But the person to draw public attention, both in India and England, to this question of Muslim decadence and its possible consequences to the British Empire was Sir William Hunter.³⁹ His book, *Indian Musalmans: Are they bound in conscience to rise against the Queen?*, published in 1871, brought, for the first time, a touch of urgency to the whole

³⁷ Resolution Nos. 300-310 (Home Department) dated August 7, 1871.

³⁸ Resolution Nos. 7-2384-47 (Home Department) under date Simla, June 13, 1873. Also see "Correspondence of 1871-73 regarding the condition of the Muhammadan Population in India in the matter of Education" in *Selections from the Records of the Government of India (Home Dept.)*, No. CCV, Home Department Serial No. 2, Parts I and II.

³⁹ "We have not only failed to attract", Mayo wrote in one of his Viceregal Notes, "the sympathies and confidence of a large and important section of the community but we have reason to fear that we have caused positive disaffection."

Reviewing the statistics of Hindu and Muslim students in the various Provinces of India, Mayo pointed out that even in Bengal, which was a Muslim stronghold, there were only 14,000 Muslim students against 100,000 Hindus. After commenting on the "lamentable deficiency in the large mass of what was not very long ago the most powerful race in India", he set forth the various reasons for Muslim disaffection and the remedies to overcome them. See W. W. Hunter's *A Life of the Earl of Mayo*, Vol. II, 307-8. Also see *Annual Report on the administration of the territories under the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal during the year 1870-71* (Calcutta, 1872), 33-34.

situation. Hunter's was a well-documented and well-argued thesis containing immense factual material, assiduously collected by the author (himself an experienced civil servant), not only from the Secretariat at Fort St. William but also from such reliable friends of his as E. M. Malony, and E. C. Bayley, both holding very responsible positions in the Indian Civil Service. Consequently it will not be out of place here, especially in view of the fact that this work had some influence on Government's subsequent policy towards the Muslims, to refer to some of Hunter's data to understand the seriousness of the Muslim position.

Classifying the following as "the three fair and ostensible monopolies of official life"⁴⁰ in India: (1) Military Command; (2) Collection of Revenue; (3) Judicial or Political Employ, Hunter says, as regards the first, that "no Muhammadan gentleman of birth can enter our regiments."⁴¹ In a footnote he illustrated this by showing how a ridiculously small number of Muslims held commissions from the Governor-General and "as far as I can learn, not one from the Queen".⁴²

Referring to the second category Hunter criticised the policy of Lord Cornwallis and Sir John Shore in ending the Permanent Settlement in Bengal. It ruined the Muslims. In his support Hunter quoted Mr. James O'Kinesly, the officer who had studied the Permanent Settlement minutely. According to him the Permanent Settlement in Bengal "elevated the Hindu collectors, who, up to that time, had held but unimportant posts, to the position of landholders, gave them a proprietary right in the soil and allowed them to accumulate wealth which would have gone to the Musalmans under their own rule."⁴³

Regarding the third category of official employment Hunter was much more emphatic. "None of the native gentlemen who won their way into the Covenanted Civil Services or up to the bench of the High Court are Musalmans",⁴⁴ he wrote. In proof of his contention, he quoted the following figures:

⁴⁰ Hunter: *Indian Musalmans*, 159.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴³ Quoted by Hunter in his *Indian Musalmans*, 160.

⁴⁴ Hunter: *Indian Musalmans*, 163.

- (1) In the highest grade "there is now one Musalman to three Hindus".
- (2) In the second grade "there is now one Musalman to ten Hindus".
- (3) In the third grade "there are now three Musalmans to a total of 24 Hindus and Englishmen".
- (4) In the lower ranks "there are now four among a total of 39".
- (5) Among the probationers "there is now not a single Mohammadan. . . ." ⁴⁵

This was, indeed, very depressing for the "Muhammadan aristocracy" which less than a hundred years earlier "retained all the functions of Government in their own hands". ⁴⁶

In the less conspicuous departments, the situation was much worse:

In the three grades of Assistant Government Engineers there were fourteen Hindus and not one Musalman; among the apprentices there were four Hindus and two Englishmen, and not one Musalman. Among the sub-engineers and supervisors of Public Works Departments there were twenty-four Hindus to one Musalman; among the overseers two Musalmans to sixty-three Hindus. In the offices of Account there were fifty names of Hindus and not one Musalman; and in the Upper Subordinate Department there were twenty-two Hindus and again not one Musalman. ⁴⁷

Hunter did not like "to multiply instances of a fact that is patent in every page of the Civil List", ⁴⁸ but he made an elaborate list of "the gazetted appointments for which Englishmen, Hindus and Muhammadans are alike eligible" ⁴⁹ and proved that in the distribution of State patronage in Bengal in 1871 the proportion of Hindus to Europeans was more than one-half, while the proportion of Muslims to Europeans was less than one-fourteenth. "In fact", Hunter sadly commented, "there is now scarcely a Government office in Calcutta in which a Muham-

⁴⁵ Ibid., 163.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 163.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 165.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 165.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 166.

madan can hope for any post above the rank of porter, messenger, filler of inkpots and mender of pens."⁵⁰

The professions of Law and Medicine, the most respectable and lucrative occupations of the time, were more strictly closed to the Muslims than even the official service. Citing many glaring instances in support of his point, Hunter remarked, "It matters not to what department or profession I turn, the result is the same."⁵¹ He gave, for instance, the following figures from the Calcutta University for the year 1869:

Among Graduates of Medicine: 3 Hindus; 1 English; and nil Muslims.

Among Bachelors of Medicine: 10 Hindus; 1 English; and nil Muslims.

Among Licentiates of Medicine: 98 Hindus; 5 English; and 1 Muslim.

Such being the state of affairs, Government service, as well as other professions were all shut to the Muslims by "the overpowering rush of highly educated Hindus".⁵²

About the same time that Hunter carried out his investigations into the condition of Muslims in Bengal, Lord Hobart wrote his famous Minute on "Muhammadan Education and Employment of Muhammadans in the Public Services".⁵³ He confined himself to Madras and tried to explain the various causes which, according to him, were responsible for "the gradual disappearance of Muhammadans from the public services of the country".⁵⁴ Most of the causes given were familiar; and Hobart, with all his knowledge and authority as the Governor of Madras, came to the conclusion that "such disappearance is by no means imaginary as far as concerns this presidency".⁵⁵ In a table annexed to the Minute, he showed

⁵⁰ Ibid., 167. ⁵¹ Ibid., 169. ⁵² Ibid., 172.

⁵³ Hobart: Minute No. 11 dated July 29, 1872. See his *Essays and Miscellaneous Writings*, II, 270-80. Also see his Minute No. XXX. Ibid., II, 451-53. ⁵⁴ Ibid., II, 272.

⁵⁵ Ibid., II, 272. Hunter's and Hobart's figures are also borne out by a "Return to an address of the Honourable the House of Commons dated 31st July 1872 showing the Number of Appointments in India, of not less than 150 Rupees a month in value, filled up during the years, 1867, 1868,

how, of the 485 Indians employed in the Upper Grades of the Uncovenanted Civil Service, 417 were Hindus and only 19 Muslims. Their distribution department-wise was as under:

(A) *Judicial Department:*

Principal Sadr Amins (on Rs. 500) 10 Hindus; nil Muslims; 2 others

District Munsifs (on Rs. 200 to 300) 27 Hindus; 6 Muslims; 17 others

(B) *Revenue and Magisterial Departments:*

Deputy Collectors and

Magistrates (on Rs. 250 to 600) 31 Hindus; 2 Muslims; 17 others

Tahsildars 143 Hindus; 4 Muslims; 9 others

Sub-magistrates 146 Hindus; 7 Muslims; 4 others

In Bombay the position of Muslims was no better. In the higher Government appointments in that presidency (though they were very rare for Indians during those days) we do not come across, while going through the *Indian Army and Civil Services List* for 1871, a single Muslim name. Of the 4 important posts held in the judicial department by Indians, 3 were held by Hindus and 1 by a Parsi.⁵⁶

For most Government appointments under the British a knowledge of English was essential; and the Muslims were far from acquiring it. The comparative figures overleaf of Hindu and Muslim students studying in Government institutions in the Presidency of Bombay during the year 1871-72 helps in understanding the state of affairs as it then existed. The figures are only from those institutions which specialised in Law, Medicine, Engineering, Teaching, Industrial Arts, etc.:⁵⁷

1869, 1870 and 1871 by the Appointment of Natives of India, distinguishing those held by Hindus from those held by Muhammadans. Presented on the 22nd May 1874" and as amended under orders of George Hamilton, Under Secretary of State in India, on February 17, 1875. See Appendix A.

⁵⁶ See the *Indian Army and Civil Services List*, 1871.

⁵⁷ See "Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay, for the years 1871-72", Appendix H, Table No. VII, 108-109.

<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Division</i>
339	21	Central
49	—	North-East
149	13	Northern
160	11	Southern
39	32	Sind
<hr/> 736	<hr/> 77	

In private colleges like St. Xavier's in Bombay there was not a single Muslim student.⁵⁸

On the whole, therefore, the Muslims at this time, both socially and economically, were in a deplorable condition. Sir Syed felt so distressed that on the 26th of May 1875, addressing the elite of the Muslim population at Azimabad (Patna), he said:

Now you take a glance at the whole of India and bring before your eyes its various organisations. Look at the Government Departments! Look at the factories or Railways! Look at small shops or big trading concerns! Look at any kind of private enterprise and just find out for yourselves how many of the employed are Musalmans. I dare say the proportion would not be more than one to a thousand.⁵⁹

Even at the close of the period under review there was no appreciable change in this, despite the genuine desire of some high officials to give the Muslims a favourable treatment. "There is no getting over the fact", wrote Lord Lytton to Lord Salisbury on June 23, 1877, "that the British empire of India is a Muhammadan power and that it entirely depends on the policy of Her Majesty's Government whether the sentiment of our Muhammadan subjects is to be an immense security or an immense danger to us."⁶⁰ But notwithstanding such high-sounding expressions, for which Lytton had a special flair, the condition of the Muslims did not improve much. It remained far

⁵⁸ See "Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay, for the years 1871-72", Appendix H, Table No. IV, 76.

⁵⁹ Sir Syed: *Lecturon Ka Majmu'a* (Urdu text), 86.

⁶⁰ Lytton: *Personal and Literary Letters of . . .* II, 65.

below the level that the exigencies of time and situation demanded.

The British realised that something ought to be done; but did not know how to go about it. They had assigned a 'neutral role' to themselves and did not want that any aspersions should be cast on the character of their rule. The Muslims had fallen so heavily in the race of life that they deserved a special treatment; this the British at long last realised. But how to do it, without infringing the oft-repeated British declaration of religious neutrality? Would it not make the administration unpopular with the Hindus? The following comment of *The Times* was typical of the very confused state of the British mind:

To a considerable extent the grievances of our Indian Musalmans are clearly irremovable. They can no longer be the ruling race, nor can they be indulged with invidious privileges in consideration of their ancient rank. If we owe a duty to them, we owe another to the Hindus, and it may, indeed, be doubted, as a point of policy, how far we ought to go in satisfying requirements which are based at bottom on religious intolerance and political pretension. These Musalmans might go to school if they would, and take their chance, if they would, in competitive examinations. If they are excluded from administrative offices that is because in the inevitable course of things we superseded them; nor, indeed, was their practice in such places of a character to merit support. If, again, they are shut out from the liberal professions, that is either their own doing or the result of their aptitudes. Nevertheless, it cannot but be felt, after all, that so large and respectable a section of the population which has just given such evidence of its good intentions should, if possible, be raised from a position of cheerless decay.⁶¹

The decay was not only cheerless; it continued unchecked in spite of Muslim protests and petitions and soothing words from the British. In fact, if anything, the position became worse. The comprehensive Memorial presented by the Central National

⁶¹ *The Times*, London, October 14, 1871.

Muhammadan Association to Lord Ripon in the early part of 1882 pointed out that while "in 1871 the proportion of Muhammadans to Hindus in the Gazetted appointments was less than one-seventh; in 1880 the proportion fell below one-tenth".⁶²

"But it is in other and less conspicuous departments, where the distribution of State patronage is less closely watched, that the fate of the Musalmans may be more accurately observed",⁶³ said the Memorialists; it proved that the position continued to deteriorate. In support of their contention the Memorialists gave figures of Muslims employees in various Government Departments mostly of Bengal, and showed of what negligible proportions they were compared to the posts held by Christians and Hindus. To take only a few instances from the many cited by the Memorialists:

In the Foreign Office, consisting of 54 officers, only 2 were Muslims. In the Home Department, composed of 63 officers, only 1 was a Muslim. In the Departments of Finance and Revenue, of 75 officers not one was a Muslim. In the Controller General's office there was not a single Muslim in a staff of 63 officers. In the Judicial, Political and Appointment Departments, of 82 officers not one was a Muslim. In the Board of Revenue, of 113 assistants not one was a Muslim. The same was the case in the Customs Department, with a staff of 130 principal and assistant officers; with the Preventive Department; with the office of the Director-General of Post Offices in India; with the Public Works Department. In the Postal Department there were some Muslims—to be exact, only 110 out of 2,035 officers.

This was the state of the Muslims, in spite of the fact that they were nearly one-fourth of India's population and held, only a century earlier, an overwhelming proportion of the offices in the Governments of many parts of India, in particular those of Bengal and the North-Western Provinces.

To improve their community's position the Memorialists suggested that "the balance of State patronage", as between the

⁶² See *Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Home Department*, No. CCV, Home Department Serial No. 2, 237-44.

⁶³ For full text of the Memorial see *Ibid.*, 237-44.

Hindus and Muslims, might be immediately redressed; this could be easily done if unnecessary importance was not attached to University qualifications. Otherwise "the Musalman race" would continue in its "present condition of decadence and depression" which was injurious not only to their community but also "to the interests of the Empire".⁶⁴

Notwithstanding all this recitation of the tales of their woes and sufferings (it was becoming very common and every Lieutenant-Governor had to listen to it when invited to a Muslim gathering or when presented with addresses of welcome) the Muslims continued to lose ground everywhere. More than ten years had elapsed since Mayo had promulgated his benevolent policy of spreading education among the Muslims; and still Syed Ameer Ali complained in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in August 1882 that "the English officials are generally this day as far from understanding the real feelings of the Indian Muhammadans as they were half a century ago".⁶⁵ He explained by means of facts and figures how the Muslims had been driven away from "the public service and the independent professions".

According to the Syed the entire Government of India, so far as it affected the natives, was virtually in the hands of the Hindus. "Their influence is all powerful in every department of State" he commented. "And that influence is almost invariably exercised to exclude the Muhammadans, whom they regard as aliens, from their proper and legitimate share in official prefer-

⁶⁴ However, with the Muslim case as presented by the Memorialists, Nawab Abdul Latif, the foremost Muslim leader of Bengal, did not agree. He regretted that the Memorialists had attributed Muslim decadence "unwisely and solely" to the acts of the British Government and not to the Muslims' own "acts of omission and commission" nor did the Memorialists refer "to causes beyond the control of both the Government and the Muhammadans". He was also against "the claims put forth in the Memorial to exclusive privileges for Muhammadans in the distribution of offices because he believed such a policy would not be consistent with the equitable principles which govern the English administration of India". See the Nawab's Memorandum to the Viceroy "On the present Condition of Indian Muhammadans". Also see the replies of the Local Governments to the Memorial in *Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Home Department*, No. CCV, Home Department Serial No. 2, 245-345.

⁶⁵ *The Nineteenth Century*, LXVI, 193-215.

ment."⁶⁶ This influence, Ameer Ali alleged, was not only exercised to keep out the Muslims from the public service but also to get them out, when they happened to be in. He quoted a high Muslim official in Bengal in support of his allegation, who some time earlier had written to Ameer Ali that "... though there are a few Muhammadan ministerial officers in this district it is difficult for them to retain their appointments, unless their head officers are also Muhammadans."⁶⁷

Ameer Ali, therefore, suggested that, as soon as possible, the disproportion between the Hindus and Muslims in the service of the State should be removed. Elaborating his proposal, he said:

It may seem strange to English readers that I lay so much stress upon State employment as the keystone of Muhammadan prosperity. It will be said, not without reason, that this inordinate dependence upon extraneous support betrays a weakness in our national character. It must not be forgotten, however, that a race of conquerors, who not more than a hundred years ago, possessed a monopoly of power and wealth, has not yet developed commercial and trading instincts. Half a century's degradation had deadened all spirit of enterprise among the Musalmans, and the absence of capital is another stumbling block in their path to commercial success.⁶⁸

Gradually, as the situation deteriorated, the Muslim leaders began to clamour more and more for special treatment. The British Government also became a little more attentive to their grievances. Ripon, for instance, was touched by the Memorial of the Central Muhammadan Association and gave it his immediate consideration. On his direction it was fully reported upon by the Local Governments and was also discussed at length by the Education Commission in 1882-83. As the matter was pending till the time of his retirement, the Governor-General was unable to apply any particular measures to remedy the situation. His successor, Lord Dufferin, however, promised, immediately on his arrival in Calcutta, to a Muslim deputation headed by Prince Furrakh Shah, a great grandson of Tipu, that fullest

⁶⁶ Ibid., 208.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 208.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 209.

consideration would be given by his Government to their grievances and demands, assuring them that his liveliest sympathies would be for those who, from causes over which they had no control, had fallen behind in the race of advancement.⁶⁹

Consequently on July 15, 1885 the Government of India issued a very comprehensive resolution on this subject⁷⁰ in which, after full consultations with the various provincial and local governments, it gave as its considered opinion that "the chief drawback in the way of the advancement of the Muhammadan community in times past has been their inability or unwillingness to take full advantage of the State system of education". To the Government from the time of Warren Hastings this had been a matter of regret; so also the failure of the Muslims in certain provinces to compete on equal terms with the Hindus. The Resolution then gave a comprehensive account of the "repeated efforts" made by the British to investigate the causes of this failure and to remove them, making prominent mention of Mayo's efforts and the Earl of Northbrook's Resolution of June 13, 1873.

If the Muslims were behind the Hindus in the race of life it was their own fault; they could "hope fairly to hold their own in respect of the better description of State appointments" only by "taking full advantage of the Government system of high and especially of English education". In this connection, the Governor-General referred approvingly to the recommendations of the Education Commission to bring the Muslims in line with the other communities.

As regards the disproportionate employment of Hindus and Muslims in the service of the State, on which the Memorialists had laid special stress, the Government explained that in every province admission to the superior Government departments was regulated either by public competition or by the possession of qualifications altogether independent of the race or caste of the candidate. "If, therefore, Muhammadans have secured a less

⁶⁹ See the weekly telegram from *The Times* (London) correspondent at Calcutta in Allen's *Indian Mail*, January 28, 1885, 76-77.

⁷⁰ See "Education of the Muhammadan Community in British India and their Employment in the Public Service Generally". Supplement to the *Gazette of India*, July 18, 1885.

proportion of places in the public service than members of other communities of India, the blame cannot, in the opinion of the Government of India, be attributed in any sensible degree to the action of the State or its officers." In fact, in some provinces, the Muslims for some time past had been receiving "exceptional favour"; while from the reports of the Local Governments it appeared that the Memorialists had "exaggerated the numerical inferiority of the Muhammadans in the public service generally". But regarding Bengal, to which the memorial more particularly referred, "it is no doubt true that their numerical inferiority in the public offices is very marked".

The Governor-General-in-Council could not show any "special favours" to the Muslims in posts filled by open competitive examinations; that would not only be undesirable but would be injurious to the progress of the Muslims themselves. The resolution went on:

But there are a large number of appointments the gift of which lies in the hands of the Local Governments, the High Courts or local officers. The Governor-General-in-Council desires that in those provinces where Muhammadans do not receive their full share of State employment, the Local Governments and High Courts will endeavour to redress this inequality as opportunity offers, and will impress upon subordinate officers the importance of attending to this in their selection of candidates for appointments. . . .⁷¹

This was an important pronouncement; but it did not prove to be the panacea for the ills of the Muslims.

There is one important aspect of this question, however, which I have not yet explained: Why did the Muslims lose their superior position in administration? Why did they lose it so heavily? There were many reasons, to some of which a reference has already been made.

⁷¹ Again and again extracts from this resolution were quoted later by Muslim newspapers in justification of their special demands for the Muslims in administration. See specially the editorial in the *Moslem Chronicle*, January 12, 1901.

But what has to be first remembered is that this was not sudden; it took almost a century. After the Battle of Plassey, Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor, made a formal grant of Dewani to the East India Company on August 12, 1765 by which it could undertake the collection of Government revenues. This, however, did not produce any material change in the political condition of trust and responsibility.⁷² The official language was Persian; even criminal justice was administered by the Nawab Nazim. In fact, for a considerable length of time, the whole fiscal and judicial administration of Bengal was left to the Muslims.⁷³

In 1793 Lord Cornwallis separated the two offices of justice and revenue and entrusted them to different officers. Most of the higher executive appointments he reserved exclusively for Europeans. In the administration of justice also he introduced many changes.⁷⁴ All this had a harmful effect on the Muslims, many of their nobles losing lucrative positions. By the end of Lord Amherst's Governor-Generalship, the political status of the Muslims was damaged beyond repair. The Muslim jagirdars had lost their power of collecting revenue and the Muslim fiscal officers were substituted by English collectors. The Permanent Settlement, as I have explained before, proved to be the last nail in the Muslims' coffin. The Muslims lost their lands, which the Hindus bought. This, in a way, was the beginning of Hindu prosperity and Muslim poverty in Bengal.

The position in other parts of India was not so bad; but there also political and social upheavals had brought disastrous consequences to many Muslim families.

Further, when Lord William Bentinck became the Governor-General, he directed an examination of the title deeds of landholders; special courts were created for the purpose which, according to Hunter and Buchanan, were often misled by "informers, false witnesses and calm, stern resumption officers."⁷⁵

⁷² See F. D. Ascoli: *Early Revenue History of Bengal* . . . , 29-37.

⁷³ See *Cambridge History of India*, V, 434. ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, V, 445-446.

⁷⁵ According to the *Friend of India* (April 30, 1846), the British Government appropriated, as a result of these proceedings, an additional annual revenue of Rs. 4,500,000.

Whoever failed to establish his full title to the grants from the Mughals, lost his lands and property. As a consequence many Muslim families became paupers.⁷⁶

In addition to these "resumption proceedings", as they were called, the next blow that fell on the Muslims was the abolition of Persian as the court language of India in 1837. In its place, English or the provincial languages were substituted. This step, as was natural, threw many Muslim clerks and subordinate officers out of employment. The Muslims neither knew English nor had a proper knowledge of provincial languages like Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil and Gujarati, which were fast developing under the British. Moreover, the abrogation of the Muhammadan Criminal Law and the promulgation of the Indian Penal Code struck a most grievous blow to the already fallen prosperity of the Muslims.⁷⁷

In this connection some of the causes given by W. Nassau Lees, Principal of the Muhammadan College of Calcutta, in a series of letters to *The Times* might be mentioned since they bear a close resemblance to the ones enumerated above. According to Nassau the main Muslim grievances were:⁷⁸

- (1) That the Inam Commission unjustly deprived many Muslim families of the lands given them by the Muslim rulers of India;
- (2) That the Act, giving rights of inheritance to converts to Christianity, weakened the foundations of Islamic civil and religious law;

⁷⁶ In the beginning these proceedings were conducted with extreme severity but later, for some years, they became humdrum affairs and were finally discontinued by the Government on March 4, 1846. According to K. C. Mitter, "the newspapers of the day teemed with letters bitterly complaining of the oppressions caused by the resumption operations, conducted as they were not by judicial and regularly constituted courts but by special and exceptional tribunals. One of these tribunals, presided over by Mr. William, now known as Patna Taylor, decided in a single day nine hundred and odd resumption suits." K. C. Mitter: *Dwarkanath Tagore*, 32-33.

⁷⁷ See Syed Ameer Ali's Lecture on "The Muhammadans of India" to the London Association in aid of Social Progress in India on November 16, 1871.

⁷⁸ W. Nassau Lees: *Indian Musalmans*, 3-35.

- (3) That the Government, by abolishing the offices of Kazi and Muslim law officers, dealt a severe blow to the social and economic life of the Muslims;
- (4) That the Government, by misappropriating Muslim educational funds and *awkaḥ*, deprived them of all the benefits, to which they were legitimately entitled (with special reference to the famous Mohsin Fund);⁷⁹
- (5) That the Government kept its doors closed to Muslims learned in their own sciences, laws, literature and language;
- (6) That the Hindus elbowed them out of almost all official appointments and the Government made no efforts to rectify this injustice.

The accumulated effect of all these causes was the elimination of the Muslims from all Government offices. And since the Muslims relied mostly on Government jobs, unemployment and poverty became their lot.

But whatever might have been the reasons for this tragic state of affairs, it was realised by many leading Muslims in Bengal and elsewhere that if their co-religionists were to move with the times they must concentrate at once on English education and readjust their social habits to suit the changed conditions.

This, however, was no ordinary task. It demanded a radical change not only in the outlook of the Muslims but in their whole environment. An overwhelming majority of the Muslims, addicted to old ideas and customs, was opposed to any such change. Those Muslims, therefore, who took a lead in trying to create a new Islamic structure in India, based on new values, found themselves up against heavy odds.

In this connection, the biggest hurdle which they had to encounter were the Ulama,⁸⁰ who still held immense sway over

⁷⁹ The "Mohsin Fund" was founded by a rich Muslim of Hugli District (Bengal) for pious uses; it ran into enormous amounts. Though meant exclusively for Muslims, the British Government used the fund for establishing a non-Muslim college. Naturally there was a burst of indignation among Bengali Muslims. For further details see Hunter's *Indian Musalmans*, 184-6. Also see Mahendra Chandra Mitra's *Life of Haji Muhammad Mohsin*.

⁸⁰ According to Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam* the word *Ulama* is defined thus:

the Muslim gentry as well as the masses. A relic of bygone Islam, fed on conventions and effete traditions, this group of theologians preached not only non-co-operation with the Hindus; they also fought against every plan for public welfare emanating from the Government, regardless of its merits. The handful of Muslims who had taken to English education were socially ostracised by the Ulama and branded as *kafirs*. "The man", wrote Hali, "who wants to improve his low condition is not only called shifty and a coward but all kinds of vilifications are hurled against him, the commonest being the *fatwa* of *Ilhad*."⁸¹

According to the Ulama the salvation of the Muslims lay in a renewed and vigorous effort to go back to Islam—in most cases as interpreted by them. Towards the new "world of social institutions and economic relations" they adopted an attitude of, to borrow Professor Tawney's phrase used in a similar context, "ascetic aloofness", regarding it as in its "very nature the sphere of unrighteousness from which men *may* escape—from which if they consider their souls, they *will* escape—but which they can conquer only by flight."⁸²

Consequently they preached a religious war against the new ideas from the West—a sort of *Jihad*, which in reality was nothing but an order of "flight" given under the slogan of "conquer".

The Ulama not only managed to keep the uneducated masses on their side, mostly by appealing to their religious instincts;

"Pl. of 'alim': one who knows; learned; a scholar."

In this plural form the word is used as the title of those bodies of learned doctors in Muhammadan divinity and law who, headed by their Shaikhu'l Islam, form the theocratic element of the State in Muslim countries, and who by their *fatwas* or decisions on questions touching private and public matters of importance, regulate the life of the Muhammadan community. Foremost in influence and authority are naturally reckoned the "Ulama of Constantinople, the seat of the Khalifah, and of Makkah, the Holy City of Islam. Like the *Ashab* or Companions of the Prophet under his immediate successors, they correspond in a certain measure to what we would like to call the representative system of our modern constitutions, in partially limiting and checking the autocratism of an otherwise absolute Oriental ruler." Ibid., 650.

⁸¹ Hali: *Maqalat-e-Hali*, Part I, 28.

⁸² Tawney, R. H.: *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 25

but they also got the support of many Muslim poets and writers, and thus maintained their hold on the intellectuals as well. Among the poets and writers who upheld the cause of the Ulama, the most prominent was the great Urdu poet, Akbar Allahabadi, who, through humour and satire, so beautifully ridiculed the new trends and movements in India that his admirers, paradoxically enough, called him *Lisan-ul Asr*—the Mouthpiece of the Age.

In one of his many poems, dealing with the coming onslaught of new social changes in India, he says:

Those who are of the New Light do not heed me.
A hundred thousand times I tell them this light will go out!
My companions are the Sun, the Moon and the Stars.
They are fixed in their places for they have the Old Light.⁸³

Akbar laughed and jeered at the New Order, which he felt was insincere and false. He tried to rouse, particularly among the Muslims, the consciousness of their own past greatness by painting it in all its glory and grandeur. He emphasised the superficialities of modern civilisation and contrasted them with higher Eastern values. In interpreting his thoughts, Akbar gave to Urdu literature some of its greatest satirical poems. He wrote in typical verses, poking fun at the Westernised Indian:

What though thou wearest coat and trousers,
Livest in a bungalow, hast soap and Western toilet!
Let me just ask thee this simple question, O Indian!
Hast thou perchance in thy veins a drop of European blood?⁸⁴

At another place he was less biting but more self-revealing:

Oh God! What a revolution in the manners and tastes of the East;
Who cares for Hafiz; every one now reads English.
Laila's coquettishness is gone; she is now a schoolmistress.
And Kais has lost his madness; he is now a leader.⁸⁵

The opposition was, therefore, quite formidable; but it could not withstand for long the onslaughts of the new forces which were engulfing the Muslims along with the rest in India. There

⁸³ See Talib Allahabadi's *Akbar Allahabadi* (Urdu text), 62.

⁸⁴ The quatrain is from *Ruba'iyat-e-Akbar*. The English translation is by A. Yusuf Ali and given in his *A Cultural History of India*, 264.

⁸⁵ See Talib Allahabadi's *Akbar Allahabadi*, 142.

were many reasons for this. First, the policy of the British to give all encouragement to English education; secondly, the material advances made by the Hindus, Parsees and Sikhs as a result of taking to English education; thirdly, the hard work done by men like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Syed Ameer Ali and Badruddin Tyabjee; and lastly the growing consciousness among influential Muslims that attachment to the old ways and old methods would take them nowhere. As Hali, in a classic passage, wrote:

O! Ye, the Musalmans of India! Are you still in the same world in which your fathers and grandfathers passed their lives? And are you still expecting plants to grow in the fields where your elders sowed the seeds? It is long since that world disappeared and those fields got destroyed. Now open your eyes and see what you are! And where you are! Do you know that the coins you have are not worth a broken shell in the bazar, and that no one is willing to take the things you have in your shops even as gifts. The oil in your lamp is burnt and the water in your fields has gone dry. Take care! Your boat is broken and there is a tide in the sea.⁸⁶

Shibli, though himself a renowned theologian, was much more ruthless in his attacks against orthodoxy. He brought all his knowledge of Islam and Islamic history (Shibli was an acknowledged master of both) to dislodge the Ulama. He explained, with the help of historic events in early Islam, how essential it was for the Muslims to join the new forces in India and to remould their lives accordingly. For instance, in one of his essays entitled "Copying Other Nations" (which he thought was quite justified when necessity demanded), Shibli quoted anecdote after anecdote from Muslim history in support of his thesis and thus exposed the hollowness of the Ulama's stand.

Shibli quoted verses from the Quran, texts from the Hadith and authorities from the Fiqah, to prove that Islam always adapted itself to changing times. Therein lay, he emphasised, the secret of Islam's mass appeal and its universal triumph. He showed how on many matters such as dress, housing, mode

⁸⁶ Hali: *Maqalat-e-Hali* (Urdu text), I, 34.

of living, police administration, public works, the postal system, the division of boundaries, medicine, philosophy, literature and arts the early Caliphs as well as the Ommayyids and the Abbasids borrowed from others, particularly from the Greeks and Persians. Shibli maintained that in the context of Islamic development the Ulama in India had no case at all.⁸⁷

The Ulama had also propagated, since the time of Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareli, the Wahabi leader, that India was *dar-ul-harab* (i.e. abode of war);⁸⁸ and, therefore, all true Muslims were urged to migrate to neighbouring Muslim countries. This doctrine was not only a threat to the British administration, as was seen during the many Wahabi revolts in India, but it was also harmful to the Muslims, because it made them live in a state of perpetual uncertainty. Moulvi Karamat Ali of Jaunpur was one of the first among the Ulama to challenge the accuracy of this doctrine. He declared that India under the British was not *dar-ul-harab* but *dar-ul-aman* (i.e. abode of peace)⁸⁹ because

⁸⁷ Shibli: *Maqalat-e-Shibli* (Urdu text), I, 178-181. Often Shibli illustrated his point from the various annals of Islam. For instance, writing about the famous Muslim army, the "Jan Nisari Fauj", he said: "In the reign of Sultan Mahmud when Europe began introducing new methods in army equipment and administration he also wanted to train this army on the same lines. But the "Jan Nisari Fauj" revolted on the ground that they could not copy the Kafirs. But this revolt was not so much created by the army itself as manocuvred by the Shaikh-ul-Islam, who, being the religious head, thought this copying of others unlawful. Sultan Mahmud knew that without accepting the new methods it would not be possible for his armed forces to hold their own against Europe. The Shaikh-ul-Islam and the Army, however, remained adamant and would not shed their prejudice with the result that soon the Muslim soldiers were killed and their fine army destroyed. Today the same fatal mistake is being committed by our Ulama and the prejudiced Musalmans." Ibid., I, 178.

⁸⁸ Prominent among other Muslim divines who championed *hijrat* or migration at this time were Abdul Aziz, Abdul Hayy and Shah Muhammad Ismail. Apart from addressing mass Muslim gatherings, these men also wrote many works in propagation of their views such as (1) *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* by Syed Ahmad; (2) *Asar-e-Mahshar* by Muhammad Ali; (3) *Taqwiat-ul-Iman* by Shah Muhammad Ismail; (4) *Hidayat-ul-Mominin* by Aulad Husain. Also see an article on the subject in the *Calcutta Review* (1872) Vol. LII, 396.

⁸⁹ See Karamat Ali: "A Lecture on Jihad" to the Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta, November 23, 1870. The lecture was originally delivered

the British rulers in no way interfered with the religious practices of the Muslims and allowed Friday prayers to be held without any let or hindrance. *Jihad* under such circumstances was not permitted by Islam nor were infidels in India a legitimate object of attack.⁹⁰

That the doctrine of *dar-ul-harab* gradually died out was to the credit of Muslim reformers like Sir Syed, Moulvi Chirag Ali and Syed Ameer Ali who buried it so deep that it never raised its head again.

Besides the Ulama, there were also the missionaries with whom the Muslim reformers had to reckon. In the activities of these missionaries the orthodox and pious Muslims saw an open challenge to Islam; and since they were the chief instruments of English education during those days, many Muslim families, despite their desire to give English education to their children, were not prepared to entrust them to the care of the missionaries.⁹¹ The conversion of many Hindus as also of some Muslims like Imad-ud Din and Safdar Ali to Christianity, had convinced the Muslims that the main purpose of teaching English to Indians was to turn them away from their own religions.⁹² Even Hali maintained that "Christianity due to its

in Arabic but was later translated into English and Urdu and widely publicised among the Muslims.

⁹⁰ See particularly Chiragh Ali's "A Critical Exposition of the Jihad". Also an article on "Jihad" by G. W. Leitner in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Vol. II, 338-58; and Abu Said Mohammed Husain's booklet, *A Treatise on Jihad* (Lahore, 1877).

⁹¹ In the mission schools, through religious instruction, conversions to Christianity sometimes did take place. Garcin de Tassy, for instance, refers to an incident in Hyderabad (Sindh) where, as a result of the baptism of a Muslim student, no less than 200 students left the school the next day.

⁹² This belief was further strengthened by the help that the missionaries got in their proselytising activities from such high British officials as Sir William Muir, Sir Herbert Edwards and Captain W. R. Aikman. Also because of the numerous books in Urdu published by the Missionaries, inviting Muslims to abandon their "false" faith and to join the "right path". Prominent among such publications were (1) *Mutlashi-e-Din*; (2) *Rah-i-Zindagi*; (3) *Talim dar Talim*; (4) *Tazkirat-ul Mominin*. They also issued a number of periodicals for the purpose such as *Haqaiq-i-Irfan* from Amritsar, *Mawaiz-i-Uqba* from Delhi and *Makhzan-i-Masihi* from Allahabad. For an account of the controversies between the maulvis and the missionaries, see L. Bevon Jones: *The People of the Mosque*, 233-42.

magnetic attraction under the influence of the Government is drawing people into its fold."⁹³ The proselytising work of Carey, Marshman and Ward of the English Baptist Mission in Serampore and that of Buchanan, David Brown and Henry Martin of the Anglican Church in and around Calcutta had such outstanding success that it caused concern even to some Westernised Muslims, who also began to feel that the British, by subtle means, were carrying on a new crusade for the spread of Christianity in India.⁹⁴

But some Muslim reformers turned this development to their advantage. They brought home to the Muslims, by means of public lectures and articles in the press, that the only way to defend Islam against the missionaries' attacks was to learn the new language and become acquainted with the new ideas from the West. Usually their expositions of Islamic doctrines and institutions, particularly those of Chirag Ali and Ameer Ali, were lucid and sound; hence they had considerable influence in moulding the outlook and thought of the new Muslim intelligentsia that was slowly rising as a result of English education among them. In fact this new approach to Islam strengthened the faith of the educated Muslims in their own religion and convinced them that Islam could not only withstand the new order but prove superior to it.⁹⁵

⁹³ Hali: *Hayat-e-Jaweed*.

⁹⁴ As early as 1835 a petition signed by 8,000 Muslims of Calcutta was forwarded to the Government in which "they said that the evident object of the Government was the conversion of Natives; that they encouraged English exclusively and discouraged Muhammadan and Hindu studies because they wanted to induce the people to become Christians." (W. H. Wilson's evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons). See Printed Parliamentary Papers (1853); *Sixth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Territories*, 12.

⁹⁵ For theological controversies between Islam and Christianity see "Papers (for private circulation only) read and discussions on the training of Missionaries and Literature for Muslims at the General Conference on Missions to Muslims" (Lucknow, 1911). Also see C. B. Lenpolt's *Recollections of an Indian Missionary*. Lenpolt was a missionary who came to India first in 1841. He found the Hindus without unity, patriotism or any sense of pride, content to bear the "wooden yoke" of the Muslims. The Missionaries, therefore, had nothing to fear from the Hindus. But this was not the case with the Muslims. "They would gladly extirpate the English twenty times

But, while the Muslims were busy popularising English education and ideas among their co-religionists, the Hindus, who had already stolen a march of more than fifty years over the Muslims, were becoming politically and socially awakened. They were made conscious of this as early as 1830 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who did not hesitate, even in those days, to impress upon the Board of Control of the East India Company the claims of the "natives" to offices in the Government. The Raja's Brahmo Samaj, though mainly a social organisation, contributed to some extent towards the political consciousness of the Hindus; so did the Landholders' Association, started in April 1833 by Dwarkanath Tagore. This Association soon developed into a liaison between the Government and Hindu landed interests; it became, in time, powerful enough to be constantly attacked by such important British newspapers as the *Friend of India* and the *Calcutta Courier*. K. C. Mitra in his *Memoir of D. N. Tagore* characterizes this Association as the pioneer of organised constitutional agitation in India.⁹⁶ Some thirteen years later, on October 29, 1851, another organisation was founded by a group of Bengali Hindus mostly belonging to the rising middle class. They called it the British Indian Association; and its main object was to keep the Government informed of those activities which would "advance the common interests of Great Britain and India and ameliorate the condition of the native inhabitants of the subject country".⁹⁷ *The Hindoo Patriot* was its official organ and, by 1853, its activities had spread beyond Bengal.

Then there were other public bodies, though much less important, run by the Hindus and mostly deriving their inspiration from such English thinkers as Mill, Burke, Sheridan and Fox. Their members made a vigorous study of Liberalism, which was then sweeping the West, with the result that they began to be conscious of what they thought was their rightful place in

over . . . if they had but the power. They sometimes tell the Missionaries plainly, if you were not our rulers, we would soon silence your preaching, not with argument but with the sword." Ibid., 38-40. Both these works, however, throw light on this subject from a Christian point of view.

⁹⁶ Mitra: *Memoir of D. N. Tagore*, p. 34.

⁹⁷ See British India Association, *Annual Report* for 1857.

the national life of their own country. How early this feeling had grown among the Hindus is seen in the following remark of Alexander Duff, who was horrified at finding in them "discontented restless agitators—ambitious of power and official distinction and possessed of the most disloyal sentiments towards the Government, which, in their eyes usurped all the authority that rightfully belonged to themselves."⁹⁸

Further, the Hindus did not confine their activities to India only but, with the support of some British sympathisers like John Dickinson and H. D. Seymour, M.D., established in London in March 1853 the India Reform Society, which soon succeeded in enlisting the support of such eminent public men of England as John Bright, Cobden and Viscount Goderich (who later became the Marquis of Ripon). Within less than a decade, mainly through the influence of educated Hindus, other organisations like the London India Society and the East India Association were formed. The former was exclusively Indian in its composition, while the latter admitted Europeans also to its membership and had on its rolls many peers and M.P.s interested in Indian affairs.⁹⁹

It was at one of the meetings held by the East India Association on July 25, 1867 that W. C. Bonnerjea, who later became the first President of the Indian National Congress, read a paper on "Representative and Responsible Government for India", in which he declared that the existing system of administration was bound to collapse since it was neither based on the principle of responsibility nor had any popular support or sympathy. To fortify his case Bonnerjea quoted Mill, Mazzini and Austin and said that India was fit enough to be entrusted with the Canadian model of responsible government.¹⁰⁰

As against this, the Muslims had developed little political consciousness; they lacked both the necessary education and contacts. "Inevitably, therefore", says Coupland, "the new political ideas meant less to them. Probably the average Hindu

⁹⁸ A. Duff: *Missionary Addresses*, 40-42.

⁹⁹ For a list of the first members of the East India Association see its *Journal*, Vol. I, No. 2, 117-20. Though there were a number of Indian names, Europeans preponderated.

¹⁰⁰ See East India Association's *Journal* (1867), Vol. I, No. 2, 157-99.

student at this time knew more about liberal doctrines and nationalist movements in Europe than most young Englishmen. Certainly the average Muslim student knew less."¹⁰¹ Hence they could neither organise themselves properly nor had they the desire to be entangled with the Hindus in political agitation, the complexities of which were beyond their comprehension. They had paid a price enough for their participation in the revolt of 1857; they were too poor and frightened now to run further risks.

The Muslims, however, could not remain completely unaffected by the political currents and cross-currents in India. And, as English education spread among them, their interest in politics also increased. The first attempt in this direction was made by Nawab Abdul Latif, the foremost Muslim leader of Bengal, when he founded in April 1865 the Muhammadan Literary Society. It met once every month at the Nawab's residence at No. 16 Toltollah Lane in Calcutta and brought together well-to-do Muslims for academic discussion on political and social matters.

The object of the Society, as declared by its promoters, was "to impart useful information to the higher and educated classes of the Muhammadan community by means of lectures, addresses and discourses on various subjects in Literature, Science and Society."¹⁰² These were delivered at its monthly meetings in Urdu or in English, sometimes even in Persian and Arabic.

The Nawab and his colleagues were much influenced by the West; they showed almost a blind adherence to English ideas. They went into rhapsodies over the British regime and loudly proclaimed that it was the best regime India ever had.

The Society managed to create some interest in current problems among the Muslims, particularly of Bengal; and its meetings often used to be very well attended. It claimed more than 500 members, drawn from leading Muslim families all over India; it had as its Patron the Lt.-Governor of Bengal.

¹⁰¹ Coupland: *India—A Restatement*, 91-92.

¹⁰² See "Abstract of Proceedings of the Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta" (November 23, 1870).

Politically, the Society was loyalist to the core; within its portals no criticism of the Government, however mild or constructive, was allowed. Its basis was unwavering fidelity to British rule, which it often tried to justify even on theological grounds. It did not hesitate to condemn the critics and opponents of British rule within the Islamic fold as traitors to Islam: a thesis which the Society sanctified by securing *fatawas* from some leading Ulama. One of the chief features of its activities was the presentation of Addresses on behalf of the Muslim community to the outgoing and in-coming Lt.-Governors and Viceroys, expressing in most eloquent and picturesque phrases the loyalty of the Muslims to the British Crown.

Once a year the Society held a *conversazione* at the Town Hall of Calcutta, to which some prominent Europeans and Hindus were also invited, and a Scientific Exhibition, dealing in particular with Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Physics and Electricity, was held. This *conversazione* used to be organised not only to interest the Muslims in scientific studies but also to bring them into contact with the leading members of the European and Hindu communities of Bengal. The Duke of Edinburgh, while on a visit to India, attended one such *conversazione*, held on December 29, 1869, and presented the Society with a portrait of himself as a souvenir of his visit.

In creating political consciousness among the Muslims, the Society did not play any significant part; but in acquainting them with some of those aspects of British culture which were influencing life in India, its achievements were considerable. For instance, it rendered valuable service in spreading among the Muslims the study of English language and literature and successfully strived in introducing these subjects first in the Calcutta Madrasah and then in other centres of education in Bengal. The Society also collected funds from the rich and paid the fees of many poor Muslim students.

The next move in this direction was made by Sir Syed (not knighted till then) on January 9, 1864, when he founded at Ghazipur the Translation Society, which was later transferred to Aligarh and renamed the Scientific Society. Its inaugural meeting was held at the Syed's house and was presided over by G. F. I. Graham, an Assistant District Superintendent of Police,

who later wrote the first biography of Sir Syed. In the course of his speech, Graham paid a handsome tribute to the founder. "For the first time in the annals of Hindustan", he said, "has a Muhammadan gentleman, alone and unaided, thought over and commenced a Society in order to bring the knowledge and literature of the nations of the Western world within the reach of the immense masses of the people of the East."¹⁰³

Explaining the objects of the Society and the reasons for its formation, Sir Syed lamented "the colossal ignorance" of the 'natives' about the "manners and means" of the European nations. He laid special stress on political education. "Political economy", he said, "was formerly known to us but none of the works on it of our ancient authors are now extant From a want of knowledge of political economy the natives of India are utterly in the dark as to the principles on which the Government of their country is carried on."¹⁰⁴ For this purpose the Society translated into Urdu and published many important European works on politics and economics.¹⁰⁵ And the influence of these works in moulding public opinion among the educated Muslims could not have been small.

Some two years later, on May 10, 1866, Sir Syed made another important contribution, mainly political, when he impressed upon an influential gathering of Europeans and Indians at Ali-garh the necessity of bringing Indian affairs more prominently before Parliament. For this purpose, at the same meeting, the British Indian Association was formed. Sir Syed gave a lengthy discourse on the urgent need for such a body in India, which could make known to the British Parliament "the requirements and wishes of that portion of mankind on whose behalf they are to exert themselves". He regretted "the indifference and want of knowledge evinced by the people of India with regard to the British Parliament" and asked, "Can you expect its members to take a deep interest in your affairs, if you do not lay your affairs before them?" Quoting Mill on "the rights and

¹⁰³ Graham: *Life and Work of Sir Syed*, 49.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted by Graham in his *Life and Work of Sir Syed*, 52-54.

¹⁰⁵ Among the classical English works translated were Rollins' *Ancient History*, Senior and Mills' *Political Economy*, Elphinstone's *History of India* and Malcolm's *History of Persia*.

duties of the individual" he told the audience to shed, what he called, "moral cowardice".¹⁰⁶

Sir Syed, however, made it clear that this work had to be done on the basis of "loyalty" and "trust in your rulers". What he wanted of the people was to "speak out openly, honestly and with due respect, all your grievances, hopes and fears", assuring them that "this is compatible, nay synonymous, with true loyalty to the State".¹⁰⁷

Sir Syed's main concern was the spreading of English education among the Muslims; consequently none of his political, or rather semi-political, ventures proved successful because they did not receive from him any serious attention. Besides, Sir Syed abhorred any kind of political agitation; he seemed to be scared of it.

This abhorrence or fear of active politics was so deep in Sir Syed that when Ameer Ali decided to form a political organisation for the Muslims called the Central National Muhammadan Association, the former refused to lend any support to him, in spite of the fact that it was to be extremely loyal both in its presentation and composition. "Both in England and in India", writes Ameer Ali in his memoirs, "I had frequent opportunities of discussing with Sir Syed Ahmed the position of the Muslims in the political economy of British India and of their prospects in the future. Syed Ahmed Khan pinned his faith on English education and academical training. I admitted their importance but urged that unless as a community their political training ran on parallel lines with that of their Hindu compatriots they were certain to be submerged in the rising tide of the new nationalism. He would at first not admit the correctness of my forecast but I believe the birth of the National Congress opened his eyes. In 1877 when I founded the Central National Muhammadan Association, we respectfully invited him to give his valuable support but he declined."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Sir Syed: "A Speech on the Institution of British Indian Association", 6.

¹⁰⁷ Sir Syed: "A Speech on the Institution of British Indian Association", 7.

¹⁰⁸ Ameer Ali, Syed: "Memoirs" in *Islamic Culture*, Vol. V, No. 4, 540.

But in spite of Sir Syed's cold shouldering, the Association was successfully launched on May 12, 1878 in Calcutta; and thus was initiated the first organised effort at bringing the Muslims together on a political platform. The Association's headquarters were located at No. 2 Royd Street, Calcutta. As one of its earlier reports claimed:

It may safely be affirmed that until the establishment of the Central National Muhammadan Association, there existed no political body among the Indian Muhammadans capable of representing to the Government from the loyal but independent standpoint the hopes and aspirations, the legitimate wants and requirements of the large body of Muslims in this country, who by their number and homogeneity constitute such an important factor in all questions concerning the welfare of India.¹⁰⁹

The few Muslim societies, which preceded this Association were, in the main, as I have already noticed, either literary or scientific, though "the absence of a really representative political institution", admitted the report "occasionally forced the Government to consult these societies upon questions affecting the Muhammadan community of particular localities".¹¹⁰

The Central National Muhammadan Association was founded "to obviate the difficulties under which the Muhammadans laboured",¹¹¹ Prince Muhammad Furrokh Shah, a great-grandson of Tipu, was elected the President, and Ameer Ali its Secretary and Treasurer. To impress upon the Hindus that the communal structure of the Association was in no way directed against their interests, two Hindus (K. N. Chatterji and Saligram Singh) were taken on its Managing Committee; while the prospectus of the Association emphasised that "the welfare of

¹⁰⁹ See Central National Muhammadan Association, Calcutta, *Progress Report*, 1.

¹¹⁰ See Central National Muhammadan Association, Calcutta, *Progress Report*, 1885, i.

¹¹¹ See the *Prospectus of the Central National Muhammadan Association*, Calcutta (1878).

the Muhammadans is intimately connected with the well-being of the other races of India".¹¹²

As a result of the formation of the Central National Muhammadan Association, several Muslim societies with similar aims and objects sprang up in many cities and towns of India; and their activities, in some loose way, were co-ordinated from Calcutta. Of the important places where such societies were formed mention may be made of Bogra, Chittagong, Bhagalpur, Patna, Gaya, Amritsar, Madras, Karachi, Bombay and Lucknow.

The Association generally divided its work under four heads: (1) Social, (2) Literary, (3) Legislative, and (4) Political, and was always in the forefront in ventilating the grievances of the Muslims before Viceroys and Local Governments.

All public organisations during those days had a limited orbit of activities; hence their utility was also restricted. They had no relation, direct or indirect, with the Government; nor had they any contact with the masses. But due to their work and social prestige, they were taken seriously by educated persons, who often found in them a natural outlet for their new-born enthusiasm. Consequently British officials often listened with sympathy to the grievances and demands of the "natives" as put forth by these organisations. The Government, sometimes, even consulted their recognised leaders while "making laws and regulations" for the better governance of India. But it was consultation, pure and simple—a fact which was emphasised again and again both by Calcutta and London.

Another interesting point was the non-communal description of these organisations. In name they were Indian; in aims and objects, catholic and broadbased. But in practice they mostly tended to be either Hindu or Muslim, depending on the religious faith of the founders and the organisers. Thus, for instance, the Landholders' Association had very little to do with the Muslim landholders; so was the case with the British Indian Association, whose activities were mainly carried on by and for the Hindus. The same was true of Sir Syed's Translation

¹¹² Among the Honorary Members of the Association were such prominent Hindu leaders as Kristo Das Pal, W. C. Bonnerjea, Surendranath Bannerjea, Modhusudhan Das and Romesh Chunder Mitter.

Society; it catered mostly to the Muslims. His British Indian Association also did not have more than some token Hindu patronage. In those good old days individuals counted much more than organisations, which, at best, were the instruments for fulfilling the ambitions of their respective leaders.¹¹³

* * *

As years rolled on, these political activities, however restricted, began to have their effect on constitutional development. British officials started consulting those Indians who had become acquainted with British constitutional methods and practices, albeit on minor points of administration, and more as a matter of courtesy than of right. Parliament also took note of their activities and, by the Councils Act of 1861, allowed a few "natives of high rank" to sit—there was not much else to do—on the Councils of the Governor-General and the three Presidency Governors of Bengal, Madras and Bombay. The Indians selected for this purpose—they were called "additional members"—were consulted only on legislative matters; from executive affairs they were kept miles away. In the first nominated list of such additional members—who were prominent public figures—one finds that out of a total of six, three were Indians. Later on this proportion varied but remained on an average for many years at 3 Indians to 10 Europeans.

The Indians chosen for the first couple of years under this Act were all Hindus; but in June 1864 Nawab Muhammad Yusuf Ali Khan was appointed on the Governor-General's Council. He was the first Muslim to be so nominated. One point, however, must be noted: during those days, all nominations, whether Hindu or Muslim, were made from the highest strata of society. In the beginning princes were selected; but after some years leaders of other classes, of course of the highest social status, were brought in.

¹¹³ The following passage from an interview that Mrs. Besant gave to a representative of the Congress organ in London, *India*, is significant:

"And this revival of Hinduism, Mrs. Besant, the restoration of old Hindu ideals, is it in any way connected with the present Indian National Congress movement?" She replied, "The Congress movement is a part of it."

India, Vol. V, No. 5, 142.

Since the Nawab was the first Muslim nominee on the Governor-General's Council a background of his life might help us in understanding the state of affairs among the Muslims. He was the ruler of Rampur and was esteemed, among circles that counted, as a statesman. He was also a man of letters. His outlook was not narrow or sectarian and he helped many social causes outside his own dominion. For instance he gave Sir Syed a very liberal donation for his College at Aligarh. During the revolt of 1857 he was of much assistance to the British military authorities. He protected not only Rampur but also Moradabad after the British officers had fled from there, rescuing 32 British women and children. He also forwarded supplies and money to Naini Tal. In 1859, at a Viceregal durbar in Fatehgar, Lord Canning publicly acknowledged his loyal services and raised his salute to 13 guns.

After the death of the Nawab in 1865, his son and successor, Muhammad Kulb Ali Khan, was nominated as the Muslim member on the Governor-General's Council. But he was dropped the following year; and his place was filled in by one Khwaja Abdul Ghani, who was neither a prince nor in any way connected with the Princely Order. The change, therefore, was significant; in a way it was a recognition of the new trends among the Muslims, who till then had only looked to the princes as their leaders.

Ghani came of a family of zamindars in Eastern Bengal who had been pauperized under the British. By personal exertions, however, he improved his position considerably. During the revolt of 1857 he was loyal to the British and gave them much help. He was a devout Muslim but his religious loyalty was broadbased. In 1869 he brought about a reconciliation between the Shias and the Sunnis when there was an imminent danger of serious disturbances breaking out between the rival groups. He contributed liberally to the Government in the Lushai and Naga expeditions as also in famine relief. His donations to charitable institutions amounted to hundreds of thousands of rupees. In Dacca, at his personal expense, he constructed works for pure water-supply. He was esteemed by the Government and respected among the Muslims because of his concern for their welfare. Before being appointed a member of the Governor-General's Council, he sat on the Bengal Council. In 1871

he was made a C. S. I.; in 1875, a Nawab; in 1886, a K.C.S.I. He died at Dacca in 1889.

Ghani was a member of the Governor-General's Council for just over two years; after him no Muslim was nominated for about ten years (1869-1878). The reason for this omission is difficult to guess, because nominations during those days were not made on communal considerations. Perhaps it was due to the glaring ascendancy of the Hindus in the public life of India; they easily eclipsed all others in those days. And because of this, Indian politics, in spite of its Western basis and character, developed, right in its infancy, in a Hindu environment and consequently acquired a predominantly Hindu character.

At the end of 1879, Mumtaz-ud Dowla Nawab Sir Faiz Ali Khan Bahadur, K.C.S.I., was taken on the Governor-General's Council, which then included 16 Additional Members (for Law and Regulations). Among these, there was one Muslim and four Hindus. In the next year another Muslim, Sir Syed, was added; while the Hindu composition fell to two. In 1883 Sir Faiz Ali was dropped and Sir Syed remained the only Muslim. But in the following year he resigned and for the next three years no Muslim was nominated. In 1885, of the 8 Additional Members, 2 were Hindus and the rest Europeans.

This was no indication of any official hostility towards the Muslims; in fact Government often expressed sympathy for and gave consideration to their lot. Among the Muslims also the cause of English education was being steadily championed; while several movements had sprung up for spreading the new British culture among them. Sir Syed's Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, established at Aligarh in 1875 in the teeth of opposition by the Ulama, began to create, much sooner than expected, country-wide interest in English education among the Muslims; and many Muslim schools had to be founded in the different provinces of India to satisfy this new urge.

As a result of these activities and also partly due to Sir Syed's efforts, the Muslims, as a community, began to receive some attention from the Government. At first tardy, this patronage later became more generous, as can be seen from the various distinguished awards and titles conferred on Muslims by the Queen from year to year.

During those days, when officialdom was all-powerful and the Queen's name cast the same spell on the people as that of any Oriental monarch, these titles and awards were a mirror of public life in India. There was no question of any friction between authority and public service; their relation had to be harmonious and often was. Besides, most of the leaders engaged themselves in social reforms and education; they did not even entertain any talk of political agitation; in fact leading Indians took pride in being *plus royaliste que le roi*. Even when there was some kind of a political discussion in public, it was carried on under the most loyal auspices. The constitution of every public organisation, be it Hindu or Muslim, contained, as a sort of preamble, an eloquent expression of loyalty to the Queen; and the Queen, on her part, seldom failed to honour the loyal leaders of her Indian subjects.

These awards and titles, therefore, were a fair index of the relative importance of the various communities in Indian public life. In 1861 the Queen, for the first time, conferred some British titles on a few Indians, among whom there were, of the 8 Knight Commanders, 6 Hindus and 2 Muslims.

Ten years later, in 1871, the distribution of some of the highest honours among Indians was as under:

Knights Grand Commanders (mostly princes): 11 Hindus;
1 Muslim

Knights Commanders: 8 Hindus; 4 Sikhs; 2 Muslims

Companions: 9 Hindus; 3 Sikhs; 1 Parsi; 11 Muslims

Still ten years later the distribution was:

Knights Grand Commanders: 9 Hindus; 1 Sikh; 4 Muslims

Knights Commanders: 15 Hindus; 4 Muslims

Companions: 16 Hindus; 1 Sikh; 12 Muslims

In 1885 the communal ratio of title-holders was:

Knights Grand Commanders: 11 Hindus; 4 Muslims

Knights Commanders: 12 Hindus; 1 Sikh; 2 Muslims

Companions: 13 Hindus; 3 Parsees; 3 Sikhs; 12 Muslims

On January 1, 1878 the Queen instituted a new Order called the Order of the Indian Empire. In 1885, under this Order of the ex-Officio Companions, 4 were Hindus and 1 Muslim; while

among Companions 25 were Hindus, 4, Sikhs, 4, Parsees and 21, Muslims. The same year the Imperial Order of the Crown of India, meant exclusively for ladies, consisted of 7 Hindus and 2 Muslims.¹¹⁴

Analysing these figures one finds that the highest awards, in the beginning at any rate, were mostly given to the Hindus, the Hindu Rajas being more trusted than the Muslim Nawabs. Only in the lower grades, the new Muslim aristocracy began to be equally honoured. This is noticeable particularly in the list of Companions. These awards, however, were not made on communal lines; there is nothing on record to warrant such a deduction. Nor were they a certificate of public service. More often than not these used to be a recognition of the status and social position of the leading princes, landlords, reformers and public men. These titles also show how weak the Muslims were in all those activities which then constituted what we should call public life.

As we come to the close of this period we find that, in spite of many efforts in many directions by some responsible Muslim leaders, the position of Muslims had not greatly changed. Of course there was some improvement, but in no sense was it commensurate with either the urgency of the time or the needs of the situation. As I have explained earlier, by far the largest concentration of efforts for a Muslim revival took place in the field of education, more particularly in that of higher English education. The following table will give a fair idea of the rate of progress among the Muslims as far as University education was concerned:

Period	<i>Percentage of Muslims in the total Hindu and Muslim graduates in the various faculties during 1858 to 1887</i>				
	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Law</i>	<i>Medicine & Surgery</i>	<i>Engineering</i>	<i>Total</i>
1858-63	1.13	—	2.2	—	1.1
1864-69	1.9	1.6	2.6	—	1.8
1870-75	1.2	1.5	4.2	—	1.6
1876-81	2.03	1.3	0.93	—	1.5
1882-87	3.6	4.3	2.0	1.5	3.6

¹¹⁴ The two Muslim ladies were Their Highnesses the Begum of Bhopal and the Begum of Hyderabad.

The percentage of Muslims in the total population of India during all those years was a little over 23.

With such poor education in English, the Muslims, unlike the Hindus, could not create that intelligentsia, restless and ambitious, which stimulated political agitation; this, however, does not mean that they remained completely unaffected by what was happening around them. Besides, as there was no possibility for a new leadership to arise, the decadent Muslim aristocracy, which had become awakened by then, began exploiting the new situation. It fortified itself by taking to English education and by friendly and loyal overtures to the British. As for the Hindus, most of their leaders came from the rising middle-class thrown up by the growth of trade and commerce. To equip themselves properly for the new tasks the Hindus even took to English habits.¹¹⁵ Moreover, unlike the Muslim leaders, they did not have a completely oriental approach to politics; it was much influenced by the West.¹¹⁶ This difference between the Hindu and Muslim leaderships was often real enough to cause clashes; it hardened with the passage of time and the conflict of interests. Each became suspicious of the other because both looked at things from different angles. Besides, while the Hindu leaders were only interested in Indian problems and

¹¹⁵ Peary Chand Mitter in his *Biographical Sketch of David Hare* gives a graphic account of how these young Hindus boasted of their English knowledge and rejoiced in an open display of defiance against Hindu customs by, for instance, eating beef and throwing the bones in Brahmins' houses. (pp. 14-30).

For another and a later account see A. Alexander's report on "Work among English-speaking Hindus" at the second decennial missionary conference held at Calcutta during the last week of December, 1882.

¹¹⁶ "Twenty-five years ago [i.e. about 1885] the average Indian Muslim looked upon himself as a member of a universal religious brotherhood, sojourning in a land in which a neutral Government, with a neutral outlook, kept law and order and justice. His political and communal pride was satisfied by the fact that his co-religionists in Turkey, Persia, Morocco and (nominally at least) in Egypt enjoyed independence and national sovereignty. While his allegiance was to Queen Victoria, his political self-respect was satisfied by the existence of the Sultans at Constantinople and Fez and of the Shah and Khedive at Tehran and Cairo." H.H. the Aga Khan in his *India in Transition*, 22-23.

drew inspiration from their ancient past, the Muslim leaders often looked beyond the confines of their own land; in fact their sympathies travelled wherever their co-religionists lived—Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Arabia, Tripoli, Morocco and even China. In consequence, an inevitable cleavage between the two leaderships developed and it widened with political awakening and constitutional changes in India.

CHAPTER TWO

Political Activities

THE BIRTH of the Indian National Congress in 1885 crystallised for the first time the new political forces in India, which till then had been localised and scattered. It created a sense of common brotherhood based on common aims and grievances, bringing together people from Calcutta to Madras and from Lahore to Bombay. As the Special Correspondent of *The Times* reporting on the inaugural session of the Congress, said: "For the first time, perhaps, since the world began India as a nation met together."¹ That alone marked an epoch in modern India.

The Congress was not the innovation of one man; it was not the creation of a few individuals, however important; or even

¹ *The Times*, London, February 1, 1886.

of a few organisations coming together for a common purpose. It was the culmination of more than half a century's labours put in at different times and in different capacities by men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, and Kristo Das Pal; it was the outcome of sustained work done for decades by public organisations like the British India Association, the Brahamo Samaj and the Prarthna Samaj.²

But most of these organisations and their leaders were Hindu; in any event their work was confined to Hindus. This was, however, it must be admitted, not deliberate but the result of circumstances, the Hindus standing almost alone in the van of education and progress at that time. From its inception, therefore, the Congress assumed a Hindu bearing, despite the fact that, fundamentally, it was broadbased. The Congress leaders denied the stigma of any such communal colour and tried their best to shed it wherever it was found in their organisation. But extraneous forces proved stronger than their efforts; while their opponents saw to it that all such efforts ended in frustration. For instance, just as the first Congress had concluded its deliberations in Bombay, the *Englishman*, one of the foremost Anglo-Indian newspapers, denounced its formation by calling it a "Hindu Congress".³

The first Congress was not entirely a Hindu affair; there were some Englishmen, Parsees and Christians in it. But of the 72 delegates, only two were Muslims.⁴ Both came from Bombay, the place where the gathering met; but neither of them was a known figure to their community. There was nothing especially Hindu about the proceedings, however. Their demands for political advancement were for the sake of all Indians, made in the name of all Indians.

² See B. P. Sitaramayya's *History of the Indian National Congress*, 17-22; A. C. Mazumdar's, *Indian National Evolution*, 4-8; V. Chirol's *Indian Unrest*, 24-28; and Annie Besant's *How India Wrought for Freedom*, iii.

³ Quoted by the *Indian Mirror*, December 20, 1887. Commenting on this condemnation of the Congress as a "Hindu Congress", A. C. Mazumdar wrote " . . . as if the Hindus were altogether a negligible factor in the country and that such a disqualification was sufficient for its disparagement in the estimation of the public and to discredit its weight and importance with the authorities." See his *Indian National Evolution*, 141.

⁴ One of the two Muslim delegates was R. M. Sayani.

But that was exactly how the trouble began.⁵ When the Muslims were not there, how could the Congress speak in the name of all Indians? The absence of the Muslims from the first Congress was, therefore, much regretted by the Hindus but it pleased considerably many British officials and Anglo-Indian newspapers, which saw in the rise of the Congress a challenge to British authority.⁶ *The Times* felt so annoyed that it plainly told the "Hindu agitators" that it was by force that India was won and "it is by force that India must be governed".⁷ It noted with satisfaction the Muslim abstention from such "evil counsels" and said: "If we were to withdraw it would be in favour not of the most fluent tongue or of the most ready pen but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword."⁸

It is not known whether Sir Syed, the foremost Muslim leader, was invited to attend the first Congress;⁹ but, even if he had been, he would not have attended. He could not be at home among men who had neither the background, the culture nor

⁵ As, a couple of years later, the *Muhammadan Observer* put it: "How then can it be urged that the Congress represents the people of India? Surely the Congress cannot represent our co-religionists in spite of themselves." Quoted by the *Englishman*, November 22, 1888.

⁶ The reasons for the bureaucracy's opposition were given thus by A. O. Hume in his letter to the Congress workers dated February 10, 1889: "Our European Officials—who are here all powerful—in consequence of service, traditions and bureaucratic bias, as a body deny utterly the justice of our contentions, and are not to be convinced by anything that we can ever possibly say. We impute no blame to them for this—it is only natural—for the tendency of all the reforms we advocate is to curtail the virtually autocratic powers now exercised by these officials and unless they were more than human they must necessarily be antagonistic to our programme." Wedderburn's *Life of A. O. Hume*, 85-86.

⁷ *The Times*, London, February 1, 1886.

⁸ Ibid. Subsequently, in a letter to the *The Times*, K. T. Telang challenged this contention. See an editorial in the *Statesman*, December 23, 1886.

⁹ W. S. Caine, M.P., during his visit to India, wrote from Aligarh on December 16, 1888: "Sir Syed tells me that he and his friends took no notice whatever of the first Congress at Bombay; but the second one, meeting at Calcutta, attracted more attention and a number of leading Muhammadans met privately to consider what their attitude should be and decided that no official notice should be taken." See *India as Seen by W. S. Caine, M.P.*, 28.

the training of a ruling race. He believed that leaders had to be born in particular surroundings as much as they had to be made by personal qualities and exertions. However the absence of the Muslims from the first Congress was more noted by *The Times* than anyone in India, apart from the Anglo-Indian newspapers. But as the occasion for the second Congress drew nearer, some of the important Muslim leaders and organisations also came out openly against it. Sir Syed, who had never dabbled in political controversies before, condemned the whole Congress movement as "seditious" in a lengthy editorial in his *Aligarh Institute Gazette* just a month before the second Congress met in Calcutta, asking: "Is the state of the country adapted to popular Government?" and himself giving the reply: "Certainly not".¹⁰

A. O. Hume¹¹ at once got alarmed; he realised the harm that the Syed's article would do to the Congress cause, and, therefore, lost no time in making a spirited reply to it in a long letter to the *Statesman* of Calcutta. Hume was surprised that, of all people, Sir Syed, for whom Hume cherished such strong feelings of respect and regard, should so "utterly disapprove and dislike what on the whole our Viceroy looks upon with so much favour."¹² He rebutted Sir Syed's charge that the Congress wanted to establish a parliamentary system of government in India. All that the Congress leaders asked for was "such a tentative measure of representation as shall ensure a full knowledge by the Government of the wants and wishes of the country."¹³ He

¹⁰ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, November 23, 1886.

¹¹ Hume, who acted all through this period (1885-1906) as the General Secretary of the Congress, was an important British civilian. As even his bitterest critic, the *Pioneer* admitted, "Now everyone in India knows that the Congress would have died a natural death some time ago had it not been for Mr. Hume's persistence and unflagging energy in keeping the movement alive. . . . He has cheered the faint-hearted, stormed at the back-sliders, threatened withdrawal in case of his appeals for funds being disregarded, and, to his credit be it said, contributed largely from his private means in order to provide the sinews of war. 'The Congress c'est moi' has been his cry throughout" (January 31, 1891). For a full appreciation of Hume's work see his well-known *Life* by Sir William Wedderburn.

¹² *The Statesman*, December 18, 19 & 21, 1886.

¹³ *Ibid.*

regretted the Syed's action in controverting others' views and substituting for them "vain imaginings of his own".¹⁴

In the context of what had been said about the first Congress, the Reception Committee of the second Congress took particular care to ensure Muslim representation. It approached the two premier Muslim organisations in India—the Central National Muhammadan Association and the Muhammadan Literary Society—to send delegates but neither of them accepted its invitation.

On behalf of the Central National Muhammadan Association, Ameer Ali, its Secretary, wrote that no good could result from any attempt to force the hands of the Government on such important matters as were on the Congress agenda. He did not like this "attitude of uneasiness towards the Government";¹⁵ in fact he felt "that the circumstances of our country are such as suggest to all interested in its welfare a policy of confidence in the Government".¹⁶

The Muhammadan Literary Society was much more explicit. Its Secretary, Nawab Abdul Latif, pointed out that the Muslims were not "disposed to accept hastily [sic] proposals, however well meant, which have a tendency to revolutionise time-honoured institutions, and to bring about changes which they consider unsuited to the exigencies of the India of today, and the various conflicting interests in it. . . ." ¹⁷

There was much criticism of the Muslim attitude towards the Congress in the Hindu press, the *Advocate of India* characterising it as based on "a theory of subjection of a perfectly Russian kind".¹⁸ Even the *Statesman* regretted what it mildly termed,

¹⁴ A few days later Hume's letter was published by the *Indian Mirror* as a supplement to its issue of December 25, 1886.

¹⁵ *The Statesman*, December 19, 1886.

¹⁶ Also see letters alleged to have been written to the editor by Abdus Salem, M.A., challenging Ameer Ali's action. (*The Statesman*, December 25 and 28, 1886). In his reply, Ameer Ali charged the writer of forgery. (*The Statesman*, December 29, 1886). Next day the newspaper admitted that it was guilty of giving publicity to an "unpardonable hoax". (*The Statesman*, December 30, 1886).

¹⁷ *The Statesman* (Weekly), December 25, 1886.

¹⁸ Quoted by the *Statesman*, January 2, 1887.

"Muslim indifference" towards "this great movement" and hoped that "their children will be wiser than themselves".¹⁹

The second Congress was attended by 27 Muslim delegates out of a total of 413 delegates; of the 27, 3 were merchants; 12 zamindars or landlords; 3 newspapermen; and the rest, lawyers; but none of them was a prominent member of the Muslim community.²⁰ However, to attract a better Muslim representation as well as to impress upon the Muslims the non-communal character of the Congress, the Reception Committee of the third Congress invited Badruddin Tyabjee, a prominent Muslim leader from Bombay, to preside over its deliberations. Though Tyabjee had not attended the first two Congresses, his selection was a triumph for the Congress organisers, who, through him, provided the first effective reply to the anti-Congress agitation, which was being worked up with much intensity and vigour.²¹

Tyabjee, in his Presidential Address, declared that there was nothing whatever in the position or the relations of the different communities in India—be they Hindus, Muslims, Parsees or Christians—which should make them stand aloof from one another in their efforts to obtain "those great general reforms, those great general rights which are for the common benefit

¹⁹ *The Statesman*, December 23, 1886. However the *Civil and Military Gazette*, commenting on these Muslim refusals to participate in the Congress, wrote: "The next steps are clear to the meanest intellect. The National Congress will point out how the split was brought about by the machinations of the Anglo-Indian; that the Muhammadans are time-servers lacking in self-respect and so on. Finally they will assert that the Congress is more national than ever by the defection and will proceed to sit in judgement on the Empire generally and tell the Viceroy exactly what he ought to do. Then they will orate and their orations will appear at enormous length in the Native newspapers, and telegraphic summaries of them will be sent home. Then they will disperse to marry the babe of five to the child of ten and train up the widow of three in the way she should go." (*The Civil and Military Gazette*, December 28, 1886). Also see an editorial: "Two Muhammadan Associations of Calcutta and the Muhammadan Community" in the *Tribune*, January 5, 1887; and editorial comments on the subject in the *Hindoo Patriot*, December 20, 1886.

²⁰ See the list of delegates given as an appendix to the "Annual Congress Report" (1886).

²¹ See an editorial, "The National Congress and its Critics" in the *Tribune*, November 9, 1887.

of all".²² This was the principle on which Tyabjee and his friends had always worked in Bombay; and he found the same principle followed by his Muslim friends in other provinces, "with few, though perhaps, important exceptions".²³

Sir Syed, till this time, had rarely made a political speech; at any rate he had never indulged in controversies. On Congress activities he wrote once or twice in his *Aligarh Institute Gazette*; but that was all. His main concern had been the education of and social reform among the Muslims. But the latest Congress effort to induce Muslims to come within its fold infuriated him; hence his spirited Lucknow "outburst"²⁴ against the Congress, which he delivered at the same time as the Congress was meeting in Madras. But even that speech was not so much a planned affair as due to the provocation caused him by the "enticing away" as the *Pioneer* alleged "of one or two students from Aligarh"²⁵ to attend the Madras Congress in 1887.

Sir Syed, in his speech, came out bitterly against the Congress. He said it would not do good to anybody except a few Bengalis "who at the sight of a table-knife crawl under their chair"; its only result would be to produce "a useless uproar" thus raising Government's suspicions. His advice, therefore, to all communities in India, was to remain loyal to the Queen.

To his co-religionists, he talked bluntly, warning them that if they joined the Congress nothing but national disaster lay in store for them. Under a system of representative government their future was dark; that system would only lead to the perpetual subjugation of the Muslims by the Hindus. Sir Syed

²² "Annual Congress Report" (1887), 72.

²³ Ibid. Also see an editorial, "The Opening of the Third National Congress" in the *Madras Times*, December 28, 1887.

²⁴ The speech was delivered by Sir Syed on December 28, 1887, in the presence of "the taluqdars of Oudh, members of the Government Services, the Army, the Professions of Law, the Press and the Priesthood; Syeds, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans belonging to some of the noblest families in India; and representatives of every school of thought, from orthodox Sunni and Shia Maulvis to the young men trained in Indian colleges or in England." (*The Pioneer*, January 11 and 12, 1888). *The Times* referred to the speech as "one of the most remarkable political discourses ever delivered by a native of India." (January 16, 1888).

²⁵ *The Pioneer*, January 11, 1888.

developed his fears on three main grounds, which he explained at length in his speech:

(1) That the Hindus and Muslims were "two different nations"²⁶ in spite of the fact they "drink from the same well, breathe the air from the same city and depend each on the other for his life". To illustrate the point: supposing the British, with all their armed forces and ammunitions, were to withdraw from India, who would rule the country? "Is it possible that under these circumstances the two nations—the Muhammadans and the Hindus—could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down." To hope that both could remain equal in power was to wish for "the impossible and the inconceivable".

(2) That representative institutions were unsuited to the conditions in India. Let us suppose, explained Sir Syed, that we had "universal suffrage" as in America and that everybody, from the highest to the lowest, was given the franchise, what would happen then? The Muslim voters would vote for the Muslim candidates and the Hindu voters would vote for the Hindu candidates with the result that the Hindu candidate would have "four times as many votes" as the Muslim candidate because "their population is four times as numerous." How then could the Muslim, in such a situation, safeguard his interest? "It would be like a game of dice, in which one man had four dice and the other one."

(3) That the Indian Muslims must depend on the British for the safeguarding of their interests and for their effective representation in administration. Sir Syed asked the Muslims to unite with the British because, according to the Quran, "our nation cannot expect friendship and affection from any other people". This was one of the reasons why Sir Syed was

²⁶ *The Pioneer*, January 11, 1888. Sir Syed always referred to the Muslims in political controversies as a "nation". The Hindu newspapers as often challenged this contention of his. They insisted, in the words of the *Indian Mirror*, that "our Muhammadan fellow subjects are as much our brothers and as much our kith and kin as the Hindus themselves." (*The Indian Mirror*, December 20, 1887).

such a strong supporter of the principle of nomination. He used to boast of his efforts in changing Lord Ripon's views on the elective system and making the Viceroy agree to one-third of the members being nominated on the Local Boards and Municipalities.

Sir Syed's speech created a stir throughout India. The Hindu press attacked him with the same vehemence as he had attacked the Congress. Particularly in Bengali intellectual circles there was an uproar against Sir Syed because of his jibes against the Bengali Babus. The *Indian Mirror* called him "a tool in the hands of our enemies. . . . who has covered himself with shame and disgrace"²⁷ and slighted his Knighthood of the Order of the Indian Empire which had "come to him at an opportune hour, showing exactly the sort of men on whom State honours are generally bestowed".²⁸ The *National Guardian* was positively rude in its comments: "If ever a man deliberately set about cutting his own throat, that man is the old Muhammadan of seventy years, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of Aligarh."²⁹ *Young Bengal* described his speech as "queer, foolish, childish, sycophantic"³⁰ while the *Tribune* of Lahore lamented his "aging in intellect as well as in years", with the sigh: "Poor old Syed! Old age and Beckish counsels have been the ruin of you."³¹ The more responsible journals like the *Bengali*, the *Indian Spectator*, the *Hindoo Patriot* and the *Hindu* were equally critical but their tone was much more restrained and dignified.³²

The Muslim Herald, on the other hand, was all praise for Sir Syed:

²⁷ *The Indian Mirror*, January 25, 1888.

²⁸ Ibid. The distinction referred to was awarded to Sir Syed by the Government the same year in the New Year Honours List. See the "Investiture of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan" in the *Pioneer*, May 16, 1888.

²⁹ Quoted in the *Pioneer*, February 2, 1888.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *The Tribune*, January 21, 1888. Also read another editorial on the same subject entitled "A Pitiful Exhibition" in the *Tribune*, February 8, 1888.

³² Long extracts from the editorial comments of all these newspapers on Sir Syed's speech are given in the *Pioneer*, February 2, 1888.

"The Syed does not mince matters but hits out straight from the shoulder, like the giant he is. In a mawkish time, enslaved by senseless conventions, it is a relief to find one man at least who, avoiding periphrasis, honestly calls a spade a spade. . . . We proudly accept the Syed as our leader and exponent—the summit and the crown of Islam, a faith that binds together with withes of iron 50,000,000 Indian Musalmans. Sir Syed leads the way. His speech sounds the keynote of our policy."³³

The Congress leaders were equally bitter in their replies to Sir Syed, and most of them accused him of creating ill-feeling and hatred between the Hindus and Muslims. The educated Bengalees were especially so hurt and annoyed that their criticisms often verged on vulgarity. Lala Lajpat Rai, then a rising leader from the Punjab, who later became a President of the Congress, charged Sir Syed, in a series of open letters to the *Tribune* of Lahore, with going back on what he himself had preached for the last twenty years, attributing this change in Sir Syed's attitude to "official *khushamad*".³⁴ He said he was sorry to witness the sad spectacle of men "whose days were numbered and feet, almost in the grave, trying to uproot the very trees they helped plant with their own hands."³⁵

³³ Quoted in the *Pioneer*, February 2, 1888. However not all the Muslim papers were in favour of Sir Syed's stand; there were some notable exceptions. For instance the *Ahmadi* of Bengal wrote: "From the very commencement of the Congress Sir Syed Ahmed has stood against it and been crying bitterly to damn it. Many unthinking Musalman brethren have been allured by the magic of his name, and leaving aside their own independent opinions, have been following blindly his footsteps. They never think for a moment whether there is an atom of reason in all that Sir Syed has said. And they never care to know what this Congress is and what grand objects it seeks to achieve." Quoted in the *Indian Mirror*, October 7, 1888.

³⁴ There were, in all, four such open letters; they were published in the *Tribune* of October 27, November 17, December 5 and 19, 1888. Later they were issued in book form.

³⁵ An oft-quoted remark. In fact Sir Syed himself has expressed it in different form on several occasions. On its basis many critics have tried to prove that the Syed was really a supporter of political collaboration and unity between the Hindus and Muslims. Also see *Sir Syed Ahmed Ka*

Sir Syed remained quiet for some time but then broke his silence with a long rejoinder. He was no harbinger of ill-will between the Hindus and Muslims, he said: "There is no person", he emphasised, "who desires more than I do that friendship and union should exist between the two peoples of India, and that one should help the other. I have often said that India is like a bird whose two eyes are the Hindus and the Muhammadans. Her beauty consists in this—that her two eyes be of equal lustre."³⁶ Neither did he feel any hostility towards the Bengalis, of whose "progress and high position" he was in fact proud, but if they "wish to trample this prostrate nation under their feet, then let them not cherish the hope that we can endure it."³⁷

The real object of the Congress, Sir Syed feared, was "that the Government of India should be English in name only, and that the internal rule of the country should be entirely in their own hands." When viewed in its "true perspective" the Congress movement, he said, was nothing short of "a civil war; but a civil war without arms. We like it with arms." Let there be transference of power; the Muslims were not afraid. Let there be competitive examinations; the Muslims were not worried. But "in this competition we should be allowed to use the pen of our ancestors which is in truth the true pen for writing the decrees of sovereignty."

In all these controversies Sir Syed was greatly helped by Theodore Beck, a Cambridge graduate, who had just then been

Safarnamai-Punjab, 156-62. For the full text of Sir Syed's rejoinder and Beck's comments on it see the *Pioneer*, February 1888.

³⁶ "It cannot be gainsaid that the Muhammadan has 'played it low' on the Congress. The smart, conceited Bengali, careless to disguise his contempt for the Musalman took for granted from the beginning that the movement was to be one of the Indian 'nation', and the Muhammadans would swell the chorus of clamorous disaffection. The Bengali could turn the ignorant Muhammadan round his little finger; and he laughed at the idea of his big-boned friend as a cat's paw. But the bold Bengali was sadly out in his calculations. The Muhammadan promptly turned the tables on the Congress. Not only would he have nothing to do with it but he was prepared to go to considerable lengths in order to expose its true character and circumvent its little plans." (Editorial in the *Englishman*, November 6, 1888.)

³⁷ Beck's articles were published in the *Pioneer* of November 2 and 3, 1887.

appointed the Principal of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College. In fact a month before Sir Syed's "outburst" at Lucknow he had said something similar in a series of articles in the *Pioneer*. After analysing the various resolutions passed at the two Congresses hitherto held Beck showed how they all aimed, in one form or the other, at the establishment of parliamentary government. But that, he pointed out, was impossible to achieve; and there were many reasons for it, some of which Beck discussed at length, the most important being that such a system was "unsuited to a country containing two or more nations tending to oppress the numerically weaker".³⁸ Moreover the Hindus, being the majority and with no fear of any change in their political status because of the religious affinities of voters, "would be absolute masters as no Muhammadan Emperor ever was".³⁹ This, said Beck, was one of the main reasons why the Muslims had no sympathy with the Congress; and not, as Herbert Gladstone had told a British audience,⁴⁰ because of their backwardness in English education.

Beck's articles were widely quoted in the Hindu press and ruthlessly attacked. *The Indian Mirror*, for instance, devoted two long editorials to them, and called Beck worse than a "base unaccommodated animal".⁴¹ "However much he may object to the National Congress", commented the Lahore organ, "it is a fact which is daily growing in magnitude and acquiring strength. It is a fact although it may seem to the schoolmaster to break up historic continuity and the traditions of autocratic rule. However much it may surprise him it is a homogeneous body born of a 'heterogeneous people'."⁴² As to Beck's contention that parliamentary government was beyond the competence

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Herbert Gladstone, who visited India at this time, was one of the earliest British supporters of the Congress, whom the *Englishman* denounced as "waifs and renegades". See the *Englishman*, November 6, 1888. Also see Herbert Gladstone's article: "A First Visit to India" in the *Nineteenth Century*, July 1887, 135-48.

⁴⁰ *The Indian Mirror*, November 13, 16 and 17, 1887.

⁴¹ Ibid. Also see an editorial entitled, "The National Congress and its Critics" in the *Tribune*, November 9, 1887, and another, "The Congress—Whom does it represent?" in the *Tribune*, November 16, 1887.

⁴² *The Indian Mirror*, November 13, 1887.

of Indians, well what was the condition of the Mother of Parliaments only a few decades ago, it enquired. Was it not "an institution ostensibly representative, though really based upon corruption, (and) in the hands of a few great families, which, by means of rotten boroughs, (and) mercenary members, intrigued, lied, wrangled and tried to swindle each other out of power".⁴³ Nor was the *Mirror* worried about the multinational composition of India because "a subject race, a hundred subject races are one". They "become homogeneous in time".⁴⁴

There was also a spirited reply to Beck by Hume, whose tone was no less bitter. After showing the constitutional fallacies in Beck's objections to the Congress proposals, Hume asked him to undergo a "proper mental rejuvenation" by visiting some other places in India besides "that Omphalus of creation (for him and his Patron, Syed Ahmed): Aligarh". He advised him to spend at least a dozen years or so in the country and in a study of its affairs before pronouncing his opinions on India or trying to act like a Guy Fawkes in order to gratify "the sectional Muhammadan cabal".⁴⁵

These controversies, which were also carried on in similar temper by lesser fry, were the only sign of political awareness among the Muslims. They had no proper organisation to rival the Congress; nor a leadership which was solely interested in political problems. For everything, therefore, the Muslims, at

⁴³ Even the *Statesman* condemned Beck's strictures and asked him "to look back on the origin of institutions in England" and "to see how the parliamentary idea has developed". *The Statesman*, November 5, 1887.

⁴⁴ *The Pioneer*, November 24, 1887.

⁴⁵ See a letter by S. Iqbal Ali entitled: "Is Sir Syed Ahmed a Leader?" in the *Pioneer*, February 2, 1888. The writer, after analysing Sir Syed's public career, explains why he was as great a political leader as any in India. However, the *Bengalee* and other influential Congress papers had different views. "Sir Syed Ahmed has never studied politics—his want of knowledge of the English or of any European language precludes him from understanding how the consolidation of states has resulted from the triumphs of liberty. Sir Syed Ahmed may be a veteran educationist, but he is not entitled to speak with authority on politics. He never had any sort of political training and with the assurance which is begotten of ignorance he sets himself up as a political teacher." (*Bengalee*, November 17, 1888).

any rate those among them who were influential, looked to Sir Syed for a lead; after his speech they hailed him as their political leader.⁴⁶ Meetings were held in many important centres like Bombay, Madras, Allahabad and Lahore, where resolutions were passed endorsing Sir Syed's views. Official approval was accorded to the Syed's stand by the Anjuman-i-Islamiya of Amritsar, the Muhammadan Central National Association of the Punjab, the Rifah-i-Am of Allahabad and other public bodies.

Encouraged by this response, Sir Syed issued on August 12, 1888, a statement from Aligarh appealing to Hindus and Muslims who were opposed to the Congress to join together to counteract the "false impression" created in England by the supporters of the Congress that "the whole of the people of India" were with the Congress; and to show to the British public that not only Muslims but also "many influential and powerful Hindus" were opposed to this movement.

For this purpose he formed the Indian Patriotic Association with a high fee of Rs. 5 per month; its main object was "to inform the people of England of the real condition of India by printing pamphlets from time to time" and distributing them among M.P.s and British newspaper editors through an agency in London. In the initial stages, Sir Syed was actively helped in running this association by, among others, Raja Shira Prasad of Banaras and Syed Imtiaz Ali of Lucknow.⁴⁷

About this time much public attention was also focussed on the question of actual Muslim representation in the Congress. While Sir Syed and his colleagues maintained that the Muslim delegates at the Congress sessions were spurious, the Congress, on its part, asserted that every community in India, including the Muslims, were properly represented. As the official recorder of the Congress explained:

⁴⁶ *The Pioneer*, August 10, 1888.

⁴⁷ For an account of the formation of the Indian Patriotic Association see *The Times*, London, August 13, 1888. Also see C. W. Wish's paper on "The Indian National Congress and the Indian Patriotic Association" read on March 16, 1889 before the East India Association and the discussion thereon. *The Journal of the East India Association*, 1889, 29-95.

In the population of India as a whole, the Muhammadans constitute less than one-fifth (Plowden says 1,974 in every 10,000) but out of our 196 millions, 44 millions, or exactly 11/49ths are Muhammadans; so that if the exact arithmetical proportion were maintained, a thing no sane man could ever dream of in an assemblage constituted to deal with secular matters only, 97 (and a fraction) of our 431 delegates should have been Muhammadans, whereas, as a fact, only 33 of the representatives were Muslims.⁴⁸

This comparatively small number of the Muslim delegates was "the natural result of the present lack of higher education amongst our Muhammadan brethren".⁴⁸ Not many outside the Congress ranks were convinced by this mathematical analysis. There was a growing realisation on all sides that, notwithstanding the presence of some Muslim delegates, the Muslims were not really with the Congress—a fact which *The Times* acknowledged gratefully, adding "we must look to our Muhammadan subjects for the most sensible and moderate estimate of our policy".⁴⁹

The Congress leaders, however, remained undaunted and continued their efforts to win over the Muslims; they were helped in this by many Englishmen who believed that the Hindus and Muslims were politically one. In fact in April 1888 Sir William Hunter, who had been such a doughty champion of the Muslim cause, asserted in an address to the annual meeting of the National Indian Association in London, that excepting "certain parts of lower Bengal", the Muslims "from every part of India"⁵⁰ attended the Congress sessions and took part in their proceedings. Immediately strong objection was taken to this observation by some Muslim leaders in India and a long reply to it was issued to the press by Mian Mohammad Shafi, who later became President of the All-India Muslim League.

Shafi contended, on the basis of reports published in the *Muslim Herald*, that a number of Muslims who were "advertised" as delegates to the Madras Congress had in fact

⁴⁸ "Annual Congress Report" (1886), 7-8.

⁴⁹ *The Times*, December 28, 1886.

⁵⁰ For full text of the address see the *Indian Magazine* (1888), 173-88.

declined to attend;⁵¹ and even if there were a few Muslims present it was no indication that the Muslims as a whole shared the views of the Congress. Describing the Muslim delegates at the last Congress as "self-elected", Shafi gave his reasons, no doubt coloured and exaggerated, for their joining the Congress:⁵²

(1) Most of them, being of a lower status in society, were enticed by the Congress organisers by presenting "an aerial vision" to them by which they saw themselves shaking hands with the highest in the land.

(2) Then there were some who were misled "by honeyed words of flattery and admiration"—a type which could be "won over to any side".

(3) Then the Shias were brought in by telling them that their opponents, the Sunnis, were not there.

(4) Then there were some Muslims who attended "out of sheer curiosity"; some, because they were "promised notoriety"; some, because they were under rich Hindu influence—clients of Hindu lawyers or debtors of Hindu bankers, all bound "neck and feet to their patrons".

Shafi gave many interesting illustrations in support of his thesis. He admitted that a few Muslims sympathised with the Congress but said that "their voice was not the voice of Islam". None of "the true representatives of the Muhammadan nation of India" had anything to do with the Congress;⁵³ nor did the Muslim press, he maintained, ever sympathise with the Congress; in fact most of the Muslim newspapers like the *Muhammadan Observer*, the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, the *Muslim Herald*, the *Rafiqe-Hind*, the *Victoria Paper* and the *Imperial Paper* condemned the activities of the Congress. The same stand was taken by the various Muslim associations and *anjumans* throughout the country.

⁵¹ See the *Muslim Herald*, December 15 and 29, 1887.

⁵² For the full text of Shafi's statement see the *Pioneer*, July 13, 1888. Also see editorial comments in the *Hindoo Patriot*, October 8, 1888; the *Bengalee*, October 13, 1888 and the *Indian Mirror*, October 5 and 6, 1888.

⁵³ Shafi mentioned the following as "the true representative of the Muhammadan nation . . . in whom all fully trust and take pride.":

In a similar vein, Sir Syed, in reply to Badruddin Tyabjee's assurance that the Congress would not discuss any matter to which the "Muslims as a body" were opposed,⁵⁴ cast aspersions on the representative character of the Muslim delegates at the Congress session. Not ten Muslims came together to elect them; nor in districts from where they went did any of the *raises* (the rich) know anything about the whole matter, alleged Sir Syed.⁵⁵

Replying to Tyabjee's assurance that no resolution would be passed by the Congress against the unanimous wish of either the Hindu or Muslim delegates, Sir Syed pointed out that the unanimous carrying out of resolutions did not make the Congress a "national" body. A Congress could only be called national "when the ultimate aims and objects of the people of which it is composed are identical". Tyabjee had himself admitted that in some respects Hindus and Muslims were different; but he desired Congress to put aside matters arising out of any such differences. But what procedure was to be followed where there were Hindu-Muslim differences, asked Sir Syed. Tyabjee had made no suggestions whatsoever. Was there to be a separate Congress for such separate objects? Then what was

The Hon. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, K.C.S.I.

The Hon. Syed Ameer Ali, C.S.I.

The Hon. Syed Husain Khan Bahadur

The Hon. Raja Ameer Husain Khan Bahadur

The Hon. Nawab Bahadur Abdul Latif Khan, C.I.E.

The Hon. Moulvie Abdul Jabbar

The Hon. Muhammad Ali Rogai

The Hon. Qazi Sahib Deen Khan Bahadur, C.S.I.

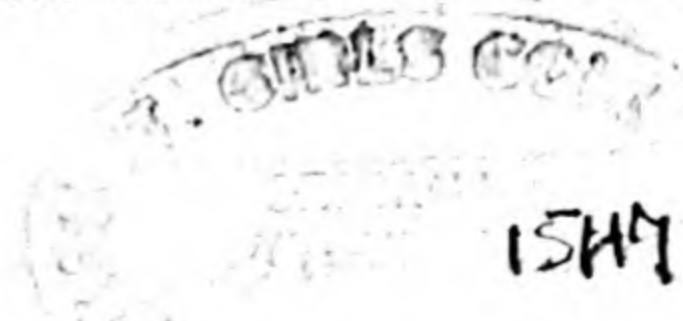
The Hon. Nawab Sir Nawazish Ali Khan Qazilbash

Nawab Abdul Majid Khan, C.S.I.

Khan Bahadur Muhammad Barakat Ali Khan

⁵⁴ For Tyabjee's letter see the *Pioneer*, April 2, 1888. And for Sir Syed's reply, the *Pioneer*, April 5, 1888.

⁵⁵ The same criticism about the absence of *raises* and *Nawabs* from the Congress was made by Sir Syed in his speech at Meerut on March 15, 1888. See, for full text, the *Pioneer*, March 28, 1888. Commenting on this the *Indian Mirror* remarked that "Sir Syed Ahmed should remember that his 'nation' does not consist wholly of such dignitaries and that the National Congress would, indeed, be a very poor affair in every respect [if there was] none to represent the Muhammadans but Nawabs" (*The Indian Mirror*, May 8, 1888).



the guarantee that they would not fight against each other when their interests clashed. All that Tyabjee wanted was that when they both met on the Congress platform they should suspend their fight and embrace each other as brothers. This sounded so ridiculous to the Syed that he asked the Congress leaders to say honestly "whether out of two such nations whose aims and objects are different but who happen to agree on some small points, a 'National' Congress can be created".⁵⁶ Sir Syed's own reaction was: "No! In the name of God, No!"⁵⁷

The Muslims were, however, not the only opponents of the Congress; there were also some influential Hindu landlords like the Raja of Binga, Raja Shiva Prasad and Munshi Naval Kishore who were equally hostile to it. But their opposition never troubled the Congress organisers. "Who cares for them?" said Hume in his famous letter to Sir Auckland Colvin, Lt. Governor of the N.W.P. It was Sir Syed, therefore, "who made their heads ache" and the more they tried to woo him the more estranged he became till Hume, on behalf of the Congress, gave him up as a hopeless case, saying, ". . . I believe he is a little insane on the subject of the Congress."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See the *Indian Mirror* of September 2, 1888, which gives as a supplement not only further correspondence between Sir Syed and Tyabjee on this subject but also the correspondence between Tyabjee on the one hand and Ameer Ali and Mohsinul Mulk on the other on the question of holding a Muslim political conference.

⁵⁷ Also see Beck's three articles entitled: "In what will it end?" in the *Pioneer* of May 14, 16 and 19, 1888, and an editorial: "Mr. Beck to the rescue again" in the *Bengalee*, May 26, 1888.

⁵⁸ See the *Pioneer*, November 7, 1888. The following extracts from Dadabhai Naoroji's private letters also reveal what serious concern Sir Syed's opposition caused to the Congress leaders:

- (a) To Wacha on February 9, 1888: "I feel a little anxious about the next Congress. Sir Syed Ahmed will move Heaven and earth to thwart the Congress."
 - (b) To Malabari on March 2, 1888: "It will, indeed, be a good thing to bring about some reasonable understanding with the Muhammadan opponents. This split will retard our progress very much indeed. There are difficulties enough to contend against the Anglo-Indians."
 - (c) Again to Malabari on April 18, 1888: "I hope Mr. Hume will be able to bring round Syed Ahmed and prevent the opposition to the Congress. The disunion among ourselves will do us very great harm."
- See Masani's *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 302-03.

But no amount of vilification could damp the Syed's anti-Congress enthusiasm. As days passed he was more than convinced of the justice of his stand, which was praised by British officials both in India and England. The Syed believed that the moment the Muslims were dragged into political agitation, they would be completely ruined. The only hope for their future lay in the stability of British rule in India. As one of his lieutenants, Moulvi Nazir Ahmed, said:

Whatever be the outcome of the National Congress, our honour will never tolerate our being under the grace of the Hindus for worldly gains, however valuable they may be. . . . The good that we are to receive under this rule, we shall have, not from your so-called Congress, but from Queen Victoria, from the Viceroy, from the Lieutenant-Governor, from the Commissioner and the Deputy-Commissioner—and God willing we shall have plenty from them even without our asking.⁵⁹

When the Congress was established in 1885, many high-ranking British officials were well disposed towards it. In fact Lord Reading, the Governor of Bombay, was to have inaugurated its first session.⁶⁰ But as it grew in strength and became increasingly critical of British administration, the officials became alarmed and suspicious of its activities. By the end of 1888 it was not only condemned publicly by Sir Lepel Graffin, Political Agent in Central India, and Sir Auckland Colvin, Lt.-Governor of the N.W. Province, but also ridiculed by the Viceroy, who was till then "advertised" by the Congress leaders as being one of their chief supporters. For Sir Syed all these were encouraging signs; they made him more determined and firm in his stand.

The support that he received from his followers was also no

⁵⁹ Nazir Ahmed: *Lecturon-ha Majmu'a* (Urdu text), 13.

⁶⁰ According to W. C. Bonnerjee in 1898 "The Indian National Congress, as it was originally started and as it has since been carried on, is in reality the work of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava . . .". See his introductory note to G. A. Natesan's *Indian Politics*. According to Masani "if Allan Hume might be called the father of the Congress, the Marquis of Dufferin was the God-father." See his *Dadabhai Naoroji*, 303.

less encouraging. All over the country influential Muslims were found responding to his call; while, within less than six months of the formation of the Indian Patriotic Association, 48 *anjumans* from various parts of India intimated their desire to join it. At first the Association had some Hindu support but it soon developed into a purely Muslim organisation. For this, Sir Syed was not to be blamed; he wanted it to remain a joint concern of both the Hindus and Muslims, who were opposed to the policy and programme of the Congress. But Raja Shiva Prasad, his co-secretary, frustrated his efforts by proposing at a general meeting of the Hindu and Muslim Taluqdars of Oudh, held at Lucknow on November 23, 1888, that there should be two different organisations, one Hindu and the other Muslim, under the leaders of the two communities respectively and that their work should be co-ordinated by a central body to be called the Anjuman Khair Khahan Mulk-i-Hind, or the Indian Loyal Association, with the Maharaja of Banaras as its President and Sir Syed and the Raja of Bhinga as its joint secretaries.⁶¹ Sir Syed did not like the proposal but acquiesced in it. Soon, he became disgusted with the tactics of Raja Shiva Prasad, who, in his hatred of the Congress, wanted the central organisation to demand of the Government the immediate trial of all Congress leaders as public criminals, if need be by the enactment of certain additional clauses to the Criminal Procedure Code.⁶² Sir Syed did not agree with his Hindu colleagues and reorganised his old association under a new name: The United Indian Patriotic Association.⁶³

The first parliamentary reaction in London to these political developments in India was witnessed in the House of Commons on December 4, 1888, when a member, J. M. Maclean⁶⁴ of Oldham, asked Sir John Gorst, the Under-Secretary of State for India, whether he had seen the report of

⁶¹ For a full report of the meeting see the *Pioneer*, November 24, 1888.

⁶² The relevant portion from Raja Shiva Prasad's petition is quoted in full in an editorial in the *Indian Mirror*, November 27, 1888.

⁶³ See his long letter on this controversy in the *Pioneer*, November 26, 1888.

⁶⁴ Maclean was previously the editor of the *Bombay Gazette*. See his *Recollections of Westminster and India*.

a speech delivered by the Viceroy on St. Andrew's Day in Calcutta⁶⁵ in which he had accused the members of the Congress of trying "to excite the hatred of the people against the public servants of the Crown in India"; and its principal secretary of boasting "that he and his friends held in their hands the keys not only of popular insurrection but of military revolt",⁶⁶ and further whether "this principal secretary called by the native press 'the Father of the Congress' and the author of its most seditious pamphlets is an Englishman named Hume, who was formerly a member of the Bengal Civil Service"; and further whether "urgent representations have been made by most of the Native Princes and by the leaders of the Indian Muhammadans as to the widespread mischief caused by the revolutionary speeches of delegates to a Congress which aims at destroying the security of English rule in India; and what steps in these circumstances the Indian Government intends to take with regard to further meetings of Congress?"⁶⁷

Before this question—which, as I have pointed out earlier, was the first reference in Parliament to any kind of political activities in India—was answered, Charles Bradlaugh asked the Speaker whether it was not unparliamentary in its wording and irregular as containing debatable matter. The Speaker upheld the objection and deferred the question till December 6, 1888, when it was again put, in a properly amended form, by Maclean. In his reply Sir John Gorst admitted that "representations have been made to the Government of India by Native Chiefs and leading Muhammadans as to the mischievous effect of these publications and speeches made by delegates at the Congress", but said that he had no

⁶⁵ For full text of the Viceroy's speech see the *Englishman*, December 1, 1888. For "The Press on the Viceroy's speech" see the *Pioneer*, December 3, 1888.

⁶⁶ For Hume's reply to these charges against him by Dufferin see the *Indian Mirror*, December 2, 1888.

⁶⁷ See *Hansard* (Debates on Indian Affairs) Session: 1888, 1142-44. Also see Maclean's article on "The Home Rule Movement in India" in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review* for January-April 1889, 424-37.

intimation as to the policy of the Government of India in regard to future meetings of the Congress.⁶⁸

In the midst of such hostility and opposition the fourth Congress met at Allahabad during Christmas week 1888. The local officials put many obstacles in the way of the Reception Committee, but despite them, this Congress proved to be the best organised and the most successful. Truly did Moulvi Muhammad Hidayet Rasul, a Muslim delegate from the Punjab, say: ". . . if our hostile brethren had not made such a grand show of opposition the Congress would certainly not have been the success that it has been today."⁶⁹ He compared the Congress to the vine, "which the more it is pruned the more it flourishes".⁷⁰

In the speeches of the leading delegates at this Congress two points were mostly emphasised:

- (1) that the Congress was a thoroughly loyal and law-abiding movement;
- (2) that it had the support of the Muslims.

The very first speech, that by the Chairman of the Reception Committee, was devoted to an exposition of these two points. "Are we disloyal?" he asked the gathering, which shouted "No, No". He went on to assure the Government that "if occasion arises, we will prove to our opponents that it is we who are loyal and not they; it is we who will support the Government and not they; it is we who will be ready with our purses and not they."⁷¹

Referring to the alleged Muslim opposition to the Congress, Pandit Ajudianath,⁷² with a dramatic gesture, asked the delegates to have a look "round this hall" and they would find plenty of Muslims in their midst, "noblemen of the highest

⁶⁸ *Hansard*, *Ibid.*, 1144-46.

However the Congress had by then begun to cause some serious concern to India Office. See Sir John Gorst's letter to Lord Lansdowne dated November 23, 1888 quoted in *Lord Lansdowne: A Biography* by Lord Newton, 60.

⁶⁹ *Annual Congress Report* (1888), 51.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* Also see "Impressions of Two English Visitors".

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 2-3. ⁷² *Ibid.*, 4.

birth, scions of the ex-Royal houses of Delhi and Oudh and others". "In the last Congress", he pointed out, "the number of Musalman delegates was 83; now it is more than double this" (cries of "Treble! Treble!").⁷³

Pandit Ajudianath was immediately supported on the platform by Sheikh Raza Husain Khan, a taluqdar from Lucknow, who declared amidst tumultuous applause that the "great bulk" of the Muslims was with the Congress; and, as if to give a kind of religious sanction to this declaration, he waved before his audience a *fatwa* by "the spiritual leader of the Sunni community of Lucknow, a place noted for learning in the Muhammadan world", who had blessed the association of the Muslims with the Congress.⁷⁴

On the next day another Muslim delegate, Syed Sharifuddin from Bihar, dwelt at length on the question of Muslims vis-a-vis the Congress. He asked the delegates not to be disturbed by the violent criticisms carried on against them, reminding them that this was no new game. Their first Congress was condemned as "a Congress of a few educated native gentlemen"; their second, as "a Congress of Bengalees"; and their third, as "a Congress of Hindus". "Now, Gentlemen", he said, "here in 1888 we have got before us not only Hindus, Bengalees and Marathas, but I am proud to say . . . more than 200 Muhammadans". He, therefore, hoped that their critics would have the decency to accept it "by its right name", i.e. an Indian Congress.⁷⁵

On the last day of the fourth Congress a concrete shape was given to the sentiments prevailing among the delegates on the Congress-Muslim problem, when Ananda Charlu from Madras, who later became a President of the Congress, moved the following resolution:

That no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof to the introduction of which the Hindu or Muhammadan delegates as a body object, unanimously or nearly unanimously, and, that if, after the discussion of

⁷³ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 20.

any subject, which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that all the Hindu or all the Muhammadan delegates, as a body are unanimously or nearly unanimously, opposed to the resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such resolution shall be dropped; provided that this rule shall refer only to subjects in regard to which the Congress has not already definitely pronounced an opinion.⁷⁶

In moving this resolution Charlu said that it was framed in accordance with the wishes of "some of our best Muhammadan friends", notably Tyabjee, on whose instructions, when he was the Congress President, a copy had been circulated to all Provincial Congress Committees and each one of them had approved it. "You see," explained Charlu, "we want to consult and work together like brothers. (Loud cheers.) If we are all agreed on any matter then we will submit the common view to Government; but if we cannot come to a substantial agreement amongst ourselves, then we will drop the subject until we can."⁷⁷

Pandit Ajudianath, in seconding the resolution, paid a most glowing tribute to the Indian Muslims. He said he thought so highly of them that "were I convinced that I ought to be a Muhammadan I should be proud to become one" (cheers). A nobler race he had not seen; a more intelligent people he had not met. It was sheer nonsense to say that they were behind others in science and art; they were a brave people, "braver than whom could not be found in the world". Consequently he appealed to them not to keep aloof from "true friends" and be deceived by "false friends". It was part of the mission of the Congress "to heal all old wounds and bind together all the races of this great empire in one homogeneous brotherhood".⁷⁸

I have treated the proceedings of the fourth Congress in such detail because in many ways it was a landmark in the annals of Indian politics. Never before were the educated Hindus so agitated; never before were they faced with such opposition. They were conscious of the growing strength of their

⁷⁶ Ibid., 85.⁷⁷ Ibid., 85-86.⁷⁸ Ibid., 86.

movement, but so were they of the dangers threatening its success. They wanted political reforms but not at the cost of British goodwill; they believed in agitation but not in creating administrative troubles. If in the initial stages they overstepped the limits it was nothing unnatural, said Raja Sir T. Madhav Rao and continued, "Men learn to run before they learn to walk; they stagger and stumble before they acquire a steady use of their limbs". Congressmen were serious law-abiding people whose "superabundance of enthusiasm and youthful impetuosity" were just "incidental to a nascent stage".^{78a}

But their opponents were not satisfied by such "honeyed words"; they had measured the movement and found out its potentialities.⁷⁹ British officials saw in it a threat to their security; while the Muslims suspected it of laying traps for them. Both official and Muslim oppositions were serious, but at Allahabad in 1888 the Congress leaders made valiant efforts to face them. Their triumph, however, proved more spectacular than lasting.

The Congress leaders were not so much worried about the charges of sedition and disloyalty against their organisation as about the Muslim opposition to it. They knew that, though many British officials in India were against them, many M.P.s, including Gladstone, were favourably disposed towards them. They had also the backing in England of the liberal press as represented by the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Star* and the *Daily News*. Moreover, when Lord Lansdowne succeeded Lord Dufferin as the Viceroy he blessed the Congress as a progressive movement, with which he found himself in sympathy.⁸⁰

In reality there was no reason for alarm in Government circles because the Congress leaders were most enthusiastic about the British connection. They sincerely believed in both

^{78a} Ibid., 69.

⁷⁹ See Rudyard Kipling's satirical article on the Congress entitled: "The enlightenments of Pagett, M.P." in the *Contemporary Review* for September 1890, 333-55. Also see a criticism of it in the *Bengalee*, September 27, 1890.

⁸⁰ See an editorial, "The Viceroy's Message to the Congress", in the *Pioneer*, January 30, 1891.

the physical and moral leadership of the British. They respected the British way of life. They had full faith in the British sense of justice. They were enamoured of constitutionalism and parliamentary methods. As to any question of a break with the British they had not become "so idiotic" and had not "taken such utter leave of our senses as not to see that we owe all that we possess—our position and our prestige—to the English connection".⁸¹ Consequently, throughout this period (1885-1906), the Congress reaffirmed its loyalty to the British Crown in presidential orations, policy pronouncements and annual resolutions. The portrait of "our gracious sovereign" used to adorn the halls and *shamianahs* where the Congress sessions were held, "shedding as it were", as Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya described it, with his characteristic eloquence, "some faint reflection of her kindly and motherly influence on our deliberations."⁸² Why, to "well-balanced minds" the Congress itself must appear as "the soundest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to the great British nation."⁸³

The Congress, all through this period, never wanted to fight the British. All that it asked of the rulers was to redeem "some of England's pledges to India", which were published, year after year, on the second page of the Annual Congress Reports and included, among other pledges, the Act of Parliament of 1883, Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, Lord Lytton's Address to the Delhi Durbar in 1877, and the Viceregal Pronouncement on the occasion of Her Majesty's Jubilee in 1887: all these pledges spoke in the most solemn language of the equal rights of Indians with other subjects of the Crown not only in "any employment of the said government" but also in regard to "the great principles of liberty, equity and justice". The Congress leaders repeatedly told their followers that "if you go on making your appeal with fairness, courage and moderation to the great English nation they will assuredly respond to your prayers, for as the harp responds to the harper's

⁸¹ Surendranath Banerjea in his speech at the fourth session of the Congress held at Allahabad. See "Annual Congress Report" (1888), 18-19.

⁸² Ibid., 64. ⁸³ Ibid. (1887), 68.

touch so does the great deep heart of England respond to every reasonable prayer for justice and freedom."

But notwithstanding all these protestations of loyalty and even servility, the average British official, who really ran the Indian administration, felt uneasy about the growth of the Congress in which he saw, quite rightly, a threat to his privileges and position.⁸⁴ At first, the higher officials were indifferent to this movement; but gradually they also were convinced about its dangers. Sir Lepel Griffin, the Governor-General's Agent for Central India, was so alarmed that he openly tried to incite the Marathas and Rajputs against the Congress, asking them "not to allow the Bengalees to deceive you with their talks about national congresses and representative institutions . . . [which] were as much suited to India as they are to the moon."⁸⁵

This attitude considerably helped Sir Syed, whose anti-Congress agitation among the Muslims was gathering increasing momentum. His United Indian Patriotic Association had now a chain of 52 Muslim organisations as constituent units spread all over India; some of these organisations even passed rules to expel those Muslims from their ranks who either belonged to the Congress or were in any way sympathetic to it.⁸⁶

To the supporters of the Congress, bureaucratic hostility and Muslim opposition—breaking out simultaneously as they did—were not mere coincidence; a close connection between the two was strongly suspected. For instance, in his first letter to Sir Auckland Colvin, Hume had charged Sir Syed with gross misrepresentation of the British attitude to the Congress. To quote Hume's words:

⁸⁴ See an article entitled, "The Indian 'National Congress' " by Austin Rattray in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January-April, 1889, 202-40.

⁸⁵ *The Times*, London, December 26, 1887.

⁸⁶ A full list of the fifty-two Muslim associations which affiliated themselves to the United Indian Patriotic Association is given in an appendix. Sir Syed also received financial assistance (Rs. 4,000) from the Nizam. His appeal to the Hindu Maharajas, however, was not a success. See an editorial: "Hyderabad and the National Congress" in the *Indian Mirror*, October 16, 1888; and for the text of Sir Syed's letter to the Maharajas see the *Indian Mirror*, September 19, 1888.

To put the matter as sincerely as possible, the essential points of these misrepresentations are: that you are personally hostile to the Congress; that you desire to ruin all who take a prominent part in it; that you will favour and reward all who oppose it; and that no man has a chance of promotion or recommendation for honours from you who is not willing to spend money in opposing it and who does not publicly and privately denounce it. . . .

He added that all this had been assiduously done by "men like Sir Syed, who told all his friends that one of his ridiculously violent speeches had been made at your suggestion."⁸⁷

Colvin, in his reply to Hume, exonerated Sir Syed of all those accusations, describing him as "a man of the most scrupulous truthfulness". Colvin said that the Syed was as innocent of any such guilt as he himself was.⁸⁸

Hume, however, was unrepentant. In his second letter to Colvin, he reverted to the same subject, this time accusing Sir Syed of extracting "magnificent donations" from Native Princes by making them believe that he was "your mouthpiece and you to be acting in concurrence with the Viceroy (a pure slander on both of you but none the less widely believed)."⁸⁹

No sooner was the Hume-Colvin correspondence released to the press than Sir Syed, in a public statement, condemned Hume's allegations as "entirely and utterly false". He was surprised that English gentlemen should behave like Bengali baboos⁹⁰ and revealed that, two years earlier, when Hume wrote to him on the Congress question, he had "unmistakably stated in reply" that he was opposed to it. He assured Hume that even if "Sir Auckland Colvin, Lord Dufferin, the Secretary of State for India and the whole House of Commons had

⁸⁷ *The Pioneer*, November 7, 1888.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Since Sir Syed had referred in his statement to Macaulay's well-known strictures against the Bengalees, the *Bengalee* retorted: "Sir Syed Ahmed forgets that when he [i.e. Macaulay] insinuates falsehood as the characteristic of the Bengalees, he includes the Bengalee Muhammadans as much as the Bengalee Hindus . . . for Macaulay made no distinction between Hindus and Muhammadans in his denunciation of our national character. . . ." (*The Bengalee*, November 17, 1888).

declared in favour of the Congress", still he would have been "as firmly opposed to it as ever".⁹¹

The same time as this controversy was raging in the press Nawab Mehdi Ali (better known as Mohsinul Mulk) wrote to the great Liberal leader, Mr. Gladstone, whom he had met in Chester earlier,⁹² requesting him to give his views on the question of the Congress, to which the Muslims, he pointed out, were opposed and, for which, they could not find any "historical analogy". The Nawab emphasised that a central body, whose constituencies would be "so dissimilar both in race and religion as in India" was an impracticability.⁹³

Gladstone's reply was brief, somewhat non-committal but on the whole supportive of the Congress:

Hawarden Castle,
Chester.

10th December, 1888.

Dear Sir,

To reply in full to your interesting letter would require a much larger and closer examination of many questions respecting India than is in my power to institute. The representative system has played a great and may yet play a greater part in the history of mankind. It is of Aryan and mainly Western origin, and in the opinion of many it has grown out of the internal arrangements of the Christian Church. As it is capable of yielding such great benefits I desire its extension. I have not heard that the combination of Muhammadan with Christian Bulgarians has worked ill. But it would be a great mistake to carry it *per saltum* into countries where the conditions of its applications would be novel and therefore quite uncertain. Long consideration and tentative effort seem best adapted for such cases. While leaving

⁹¹ For full text of the statement see the *Pioneer*, November 10, 1888.

⁹² For a report of Mohsinul Mulk's interview with Gladstone at Hawarden Castle see *The Times*, September 21, 1888. Also see editorial comments on it in the *Bombay Gazette*, September 24, 1888, and the *Tribune*, October 8, 1888.

⁹³ This letter was written by Mohsinul Mulk early in November, 1888.

the question itself thus open, I should be strongly predisposed against forcibly expressing any opinions in regard to it which might be expressed in a loyal and peaceful manner.

I remain, Dear Sir, with respect,

Faithfully yours,

Sgd. W. E. Gladstone⁹⁴

This letter must have disappointed Sir Syed who was shrewd enough to realise that he could not hope to enlist any support for his anti-Congress agitation from the liberal and radical camps in Britain,⁹⁵ which were being rapidly wooed by the Congress through its London agency. This agency was doing a good deal of propaganda in Westminster under the guidance of Dadabhai Naoroji, the President of the Second Congress held in 1886 at Calcutta. In fact it had attained such a considerable measure of success in creating a reservoir of goodwill for the Congress in Britain that the Seventh Congress held at Nagpur in 1892 decided "to enter into a solemn league and covenant before the eyes of man and God to hold a Congress in London",⁹⁶ a pledge, however, which remained unfulfilled.⁹⁷

Sir Syed was perturbed at this "manoeuvring" by the Congress to get British support in London; it dampened considerably his political enthusiasm. But he did not give up. He knew that he could count on the Conservatives for some support, though theirs was more a negative than a positive attitude. There were also many ex-civilians in England who were in sympathy

⁹⁴ *The Pioneer*, February 16, 1889.

⁹⁵ In fact, five days after he wrote to Mohsinul Mulk, Gladstone in a speech at Limehouse said about the Congress: "Our business is to foster and nourish that sentiment and to avoid indignities of either indifference to their interesting work or contempt for their feelings." For a full report of his speech see the *Indian Mirror*, December 19, 1888, and the *Bengalee*, December 22, 1888. Also see an editorial, "Mr. Gladstone on Indian Affairs" in the *Bengalee*, September 29, 1888; and Digby's interview with Gladstone in the *Hindoo Patriot*, May 27, 1889.

⁹⁶ *Annual Congress Report* (1892).

⁹⁷ In the year of the Queen's Jubilee the idea of a London session was again vigorously canvassed by the *Champion* of Bombay and supported by the *Bengalee*. See the *Bengalee*, May 8, 1897.

with his stand; while the Tory press often backed his case. But as compared to the support that the Congress had, this was of little comfort to him—a fact to which Sir William Gregory had drawn the attention of his countrymen in a long article in the *Nineteenth Century*.⁹⁸

Sir William was surprised that English public opinion had not properly realised that “amid all this speechifying and strong writing” the Indian Muslims had remained “very friendly to the English Raj”. In the beginning they of course resisted the British Raj and did not like it; but that was because “their pride prevented them from adopting the cringing pliancy and submission of the low-caste Hindu”. English officials, at first, distrusted the Muslim, but they soon found out that he was “far more staunch and safe than the Hindu” once he was brought round. Sir William, therefore, thought that it would be “the height of unwisdom” on the part of the British “not to take advantage of this favourable disposition of the leaders of Muhammadan opinion”.

Sir William had a policy to propound towards that end. To quote his own words: “In ruling so vast a country as India, the old maxim of ‘Divide et impera’ should not be lost sight of.” But that maxim was not to be applied “in the odious sense of exciting sectional animosities” but for preventing the keys of public service from falling exclusively in the hands of a particular community though “it may be the most numerous, the most versatile, quick-witted and highly-educated”. He did not want Britain to take any active side in Hindu-Muslim quarrels but pleaded, in Bright’s classic phrase, “benevolent neutrality” towards the Muslims.

Such writings, coupled with Sir John Strachey’s remark in a public lecture that “the better class of Muhammadans are already a source of strength” to the British, were fully exploited by the Congress leaders, who now publicly accused “Anglo-

⁹⁸ *The Nineteenth Century*, December 1886, 886-901. Also see editorials in the *Tribune*, January 8, 1887, and the *Hindoo Patriot*, December 27, 1886, and January 31, 1887. Even the *Statesman* condemned the article as “a most unworthy and most mischievous one” and said that “a more unworthy article was never we think written by an educated man”. *The Statesman* (Weekly), December 25, 1886.

Indian statesmen" of perpetuating "race antagonisms and religious rivalries" in India. The Muslim opposition to political reforms, declared the well-known leader from the United Provinces, Pandit Bishen Narayan Dhar, was "due to the deliberate policy adopted by certain members, at any rate, of the governing class". Dhar admitted that he was making a serious charge against officers of the Government but said that he was led to that conviction by his own "experience in the United Provinces."⁹⁹

This was, however, not a correct evaluation of the British position, because about the same time that Dhar was making his allegations against the Government, Lansdowne, the new Viceroy, had publicly blessed the Congress movement "as representing in India what in Europe would be called the more advanced Liberal party". He considered it "perfectly legitimate" and said that "private persons are free to promote" it.¹⁰⁰ Surely this was an infinitely more important reflection of the official attitude in this controversy than what Gregory, Strachey or a dozen like them could have said: a fact which Hume did not fail to emphasise in his "strictly confidential" letter to the secretaries of the various Congress Committees while conveying to them the Viceroy's sentiments on "our movement".¹⁰¹

One thing, nonetheless, must be admitted—that there was, all through this period, a definite division of opinion among high British officials on the political controversies between the Congress and Muslim leaders. It was not merely a division of men: it was a division of ideas. I shall discuss them at length in some of the subsequent chapters; but here we must bear in mind that the Liberals supported the Congress because it impressed them as "a democratic and liberal institution";¹⁰²

⁹⁹ *Annual Congress Report* (1890), 20-21.

¹⁰⁰ This was conveyed to Hume on behalf of the Viceroy by his Private Secretary, Col. J. C. Ardagh, in a letter dated January 19, 1891. See the *Statesman* (Weekly), January 24, 1891.

¹⁰¹ See the *Pioneer*, February 4, 1891. Also see for an estimate of official support to the Congress: *The Indian National Congress—Its Origin, History, Constitution and Objects*, 18 (footnote).

¹⁰² For an idea of Liberal and Radical support to the Congress among M.P.s see the various lists of the members of the India Parliamentary Party given each year in *India*.

while the Conservatives, because of their aristocratic background, were more attracted towards "that fine and cultured group of Indians"—the Muslims.¹⁰³

Nowhere was this difference in the British approach to Indian political problems more clearly seen than at the time of the General Election in 1894, when some of the Conservatives wanted to put up an Indian Muslim as one of their parliamentary candidates in order to humble Dadabhai Naoroji, who had already been returned to Parliament as a Liberal M.P. despite his public denunciation by their leader, Lord Salisbury, as a "black man".¹⁰⁴ In one Mr. (later Sir) Rafiuddin Ahmed, an ambitious young man from Poona, who had gone to London for being called to the Bar and who was a little known by that time because he had started one or two organisations like the Muslim Patriotic League to oppose the Congress, the Conservatives found a most willing candidate.¹⁰⁵ His name was, therefore, vigorously canvassed among leading Conservatives and was strongly supported among others by Sir John Gorst, who spoke in high terms about Ahmed at a dinner at the Junior Constitutional Club in London.¹⁰⁶ *The Pall Mall Gazette* prominently displayed in its columns a letter by one Maulvi Muhammad Barkatullah, M.A., Professor of Oriental Languages at the Liverpool College, who had appealed to the British public to back up Ahmed's candidature, emphasising that his return to Parliament would be "hailed with delight by

¹⁰³ " the distinction of manner and fine appearance of the Muhamadan Landholder" as Rudyard Kipling put it in his article for the *Contemporary Review*, September 1890, 341.

¹⁰⁴ For a reaction in India to Salisbury's remark see the *Reynold's Newspaper*, December 9, 1888. For a summary of comments in the British press and Gladstone's condemnation of it see the *Bombay Gazette*, January 8, 1889.

¹⁰⁵ For further details about Rafiuddin Ahmed see the *Bombay Gazette*, November 23, 1894.

¹⁰⁶ See the "English Political and Social Letter" by its London correspondent in the *Bombay Gazette*, December 10, 1894. According to the correspondent, it was because of Gorst's unfortunate remarks that the occasion caused "so much comment in Anglo-Indian circles".

For extracts from Rafiuddin Ahmed's speech at the Junior Constitutional Club see the *Bengalee*, December 8 and 22, 1894.

Indian Muslims";¹⁰⁷ likewise the *St. James' Gazette* editorially commented that "it is just as well that the English people should realise that the Bengali baboo and the Congress gentlemen are not the only kind of educated natives of India."¹⁰⁸

But whilst the Conservative Party (or the Unionist Party as it was then called) continued to debate the selection of Rafiuddin Ahmed, the *Times of India*, one of the most influential Anglo-Indian newspapers, came out with a scathing criticism.¹⁰⁹ What it objected to most seriously was that "in the candidature of this not very important young gentleman is the deliberate intention which marks it to exhibit before the English constituencies the very dissension and differences which the best statesmanship of the rulers of India is engaged in reconciling and subliming." The banner of Indian disunity must not be allowed to be raised in England at a time "when we are doing our best to lower it here". Whether the Brahmins were "going too fast" or the Muslim interests needed "safeguards" were "just the kind of questions" which "should not be discussed in the heated stir of party conflict in England". The newspaper thought that Rafiuddin Ahmed was incapable of rendering any useful service in Parliament because "no Indian candidate who has appeared hitherto has come forward as he has, trading upon the rivalries and animosities of the races and sectaries whom he has left behind. . . ." *The Times of India*, therefore, appealed to the "great English party" not to violate "its duty to India by taking sides". Otherwise the Unionist Party would be justifiably open to the charge of not being "so much the partisans of union at home as of discord in India."

After these strong words from a quarter whose views were generally respected by English politicians interested in Indian

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in the *Moslem Chronicle*, April 18, 1895. Also see a letter by "Insaf Pasand" on the "Muhammadan Unionist Candidate" in the *Bombay Gazette*, December 12, 1894.

¹⁰⁸ *St. James' Gazette*, November 19, 1894.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in *India* for January 1895. *The Bombay Gazette* was also not favourably disposed towards Ahmed's candidature. See the *Bombay Gazette*, December 10, 1894. The attitude of the *Times of India* was much applauded by the Congress press. *The Indian Spectator* described "this wholesome advice" as in "the best traditions of Anglo-Indian journalism". See the *Indian Spectator*, November 25, 1894.

affairs, the Conservatives silently dropped Ahmed and selected as their Indian candidate one from Naoroji's own community,—the Parsees. He was M. Bhownagree, who was later knighted. Though Bhownagree got elected the purpose of the Conservatives remained unsatisfied because Naoroji, whom they wanted a fellow-Indian to spite in Parliament, was one of the many casualties in the Liberal rout at the General Election. Bhownagree was much despised by supporters of the Congress in India because of his association with the Conservatives.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile in India the Congress was gathering more and more strength; its fifth session held in Bombay in 1889 was a tremendous success, especially because of the presence of Charles Bradlaugh, who had come all the way from London to attend it. This Congress attracted nearly two thousand delegates out of which 254 were Muslims, the largest Muslim attendance that any Congress had during this period.¹¹¹

Till then not much thought had been given by the Congress organisers to the question of proper election of delegates and their systematic representation from different provinces. But by the time the seventh Congress was held in Nagpur in 1891, Hume was able to report that the election of delegates had been systematised; that the men elected were, on the whole, "more thoroughly representative"; and that in some cases even registration was refused to delegates whose credentials were not in order. No special efforts were made also to secure communal representation; but, said Hume, "the desired result comes about of itself";¹¹² a statement which was not borne out by facts because by 1894, when the Tenth Congress was held in Madras, the Muslim representation had fallen to barely 24 in a total of about 1,200 delegates, with the result that the Chairman of

¹¹⁰ See *The Indian Political Estimate of M. Bhownagree, M.P., or the Bhownagree Boom Exposed*. The volume, which was published in Bombay, contains some 272 pages of the "opinion of nearly the whole Indian press regarding the extraordinary attempt made by Mr. Bhownagree to pose as the representative of the Indian people and to obtain from them a certificate of approval of his Indian politics".

¹¹¹ For the names, occupations and places whence these delegates came, see the list given as Appendix I in the "Annual Congress Report" (1889), 39-115.

¹¹² *Annual Congress Report* (1891), iv-v.

the Reception Committee had to admit publicly that an important section of the Muslims were holding aloof from "our movement" and organising their own educational conferences and political societies.¹¹³ Even of the 24 Muslim delegates, 18 came from places near Madras; while one each came from Bombay, Satara, Berar and Aligarh and the remaining two from Hyderabad (Dn.) Professionally, a majority of them were merchants, a class which had rarely been held in any high respect by the Muslim society. The position at the eleventh Congress held in Poona the following year was still worse. There were only 19 Muslims out of 1,584 delegates, 17 of them being residents of Poona or places near Poona. But notwithstanding these figures, Surendranath Banerjea, who presided over the Poona session, insisted on calling it "the Congress of United India, of Hindus and Muhammadans, of Christians, of Parsees and of Sikhs. . . ." ¹¹⁴

To return to the Muslim opponents of the Congress: till then Sir Syed had carried on his political activities on non-communal lines, trying to organise both Hindus and Muslims on an anti-Congress basis. His United Indian Patriotic Association, though overwhelmingly Muslim in composition, was not communal in character; some Hindu landlords and taluqdars took an active part in its proceedings. But events, particularly the Hindu-Muslim riots and the Hindi-Urdu controversy, convinced Sir Syed that no co-operation with the Hindus on any basis was possible.¹¹⁵ He, therefore, called a small meeting of some influential Muslims on December 30, 1894 at his house in Aligarh to discuss the Indian political situation. Those present on the

¹¹³ Ibid. (1894), 14.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. (1895), 15. Two years later the situation was still worse in spite of the fact that, as the *Moslem Chronicle* put it, "in order to make its [i.e. the Congress's] existence more powerful and influential its promoters have been moving heaven and earth to get the Muhammadans too into their camp." (*The Moslem Chronicle*, February 20, 1897).

¹¹⁵ In fact, immediately after Sir Syed's break with Raja Shiva Prasad, the *Morning Post* hinted that "Sir Syed Ahmed has sought the co-operation of Hindus; but we cannot be surprised if, in the face of this betrayal, he fights shy in future of support offered by others than Muhammadans" (Quoted in the *Indian Mirror*, November 30, 1888).

occasion, besides Sir Syed, included Nawab Mohsinul Mulk, Syed Mahmud, Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali, Khwaja Yusuf Shah, Shamsul-Ulama Zaka Ullah, Moulvi Karamat Husain and the Honourable Ismail Khan.

On Sir Syed's request, Beck delivered a long address to the gathering in which he tried to approach the Indian political problems "from the same point of view as that of a loyal Musalman".¹¹⁶ Granting that British Raj had come to stay, how were the political rights and interests of the Muslims to be protected and their political prosperity to be secured? This question had suddenly become serious because of "two agitations. . . . surging throughout the country. . . . for some years". The first was the Congress, and the second, the anti-cow-killing agitation. One was anti-English, the other, anti-Muslim. The Muslims had no sympathy with the Congress because they realised that "the English are much better disposed towards them than those classes of the Hindus who are anxious to monopolise power and appointments". The object of the anti-cow-killing movement was not only to prevent the Muslims but also Englishmen "from killing cows for good". Therefore, in their final analysis, the two agitations were a combined attack against both the English and the Muslims. It was high time, said Beck, that the English and the Muslims became "united in a firm alliance" because they were both "in a minority" in India and were, therefore, "adversely affected by the application of democratic ideas". The Muslim masses must be made to appreciate these ties and sentiments.

After briefly explaining recent events like the Hindu-Muslim riots, the introduction of elective principles into legislatures and the resolution of the House of Commons in favour of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service, Beck pointed out that the Muslims were "in a very awkward

¹¹⁶ For full text of Beck's speech see the *Pioneer*, January 14, 1894. Also see an editorial, "The Patriotic Association Revived", in the *Bengalee*, December 8, 1894. According to this paper, "their failure has been wasted upon them, and now they have organised themselves again into another Association, with a somewhat more pompous name but with principles not a whit removed from those which had led to their certain failure in the past."

dilemma", being, on the one hand, threatened by Hindu political agitation, and, on the other, made to suffer due to lack of any proper political organisation.

He, therefore, suggested that the influential Muslims should join together and form an association for representing Muslim interests not only before the Government of India but also before the British public. This association was not to indulge in any political agitation, nor to hold any public meetings nor to affiliate other *anjumans* or associations to it. It should be confined only to educated Muslims (excluding students), in whom a sense of responsibility should be inculcated so that they might be able to espouse the Muslim cause in the British press and before Government officials. The policy of the association was to be determined by the leaders and not by ordinary members. Its headquarters would be at Aligarh.

At the close of Beck's address, an animated discussion followed and then, on Sir Syed's suggestion, the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India was formally launched.¹¹⁷ But this body also, like its predecessor, the United Indian Patriotic Association, did not accomplish much. There was no general meeting of the ordinary members; while the Executive Council, which was supreme, met once or twice a year, mostly during the annual sessions of the Muhammadan Educational Conference. The Association passed some resolutions on important matters like competitive examinations, famine, and on economic conditions—usually echoing the views expressed by the Anglo-Indian newspapers—and once presented a comprehensive memorandum on the question of Muslim representation in legislative councils and in district boards and municipalities.¹¹⁸ There is little evidence, however, that it ever developed into an influential or powerful organisation.

The Congress organisers, in spite of their recent failures, had not given up the idea of uniting the Hindus and Muslims on

¹¹⁷ For rules and regulations of the Association see Appendix D. According to Mian Muhammad Shafi, who played a most prominent part in the early history of the Muslim League, even at this time "our lamented leader put his foot down against public agitation in any form whatsoever". See *Kayastha Samachar*, November 1901, 372.

¹¹⁸ For a full discussion of the Memorandum see Chapter III.

a common political platform. If the Congress was not really a national organisation, they said, it was the fault of the Muslims who persisted in non-co-operating with it. The spread of English education among them would, however, make them realise that in political unity lay the salvation of all: at least that was their sincere hope. Sir Syed strongly disagreed with this, maintaining that the Muslims, however highly educated they became, would never join the Hindu political agitators because "being in the minority in numbers", they would not derive any benefit from such association; on the contrary they would become *Khasr-ud-dunia val akhirah*—a Quranic text, meaning "a loss to this world as well as the next".¹¹⁹

Such repeated rebuffs discouraged the Congress leaders considerably in their efforts to present a united political front to the British authorities. But they persisted and emphasised, again and again, that the Congress was a non-communal organisation. To prove it once more, they invited Rehmatulla Sayani, a well-known Bombay solicitor, to preside over the Twelfth Congress held in Calcutta in 1896. His selection was hailed by the Hindu press as one more evidence of the desire of the Congress leaders to co-operate with the Muslims on political matters.

At this time Haji Muhammad Ismail Khan,¹²⁰ one of Sir Syed's chief lieutenants, came out with a concrete suggestion for a political settlement between the Hindu and Muslim leaders. In a letter to the newly-elected Congress President, Sayani, he suggested that if the Congress was really desirous of Hindu-Muslim unity then he should get it to agree, as a basis of that unity, "equality of political representation" between the two communities. To quote Ismail Khan: The Congress must decide, by a resolution, that "in the Councils of the Government and in Municipal and Local Boards the Hindus and Musalmans may have an equal number of elected mem-

¹¹⁹ See Sir Syed's article in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* on "What will be the feeling of Indian Muhammadans after they have obtained high education in English?". English translation in the *Moslem Chronicle*, January 9, 1897.

¹²⁰ For a short account of his life see Muhammad Yahaya Tanha's *Sairul Mussanifeen* (Urdu text), II, 73-74.

bers".¹²¹ The Muslim newspapers welcomed Ismail Khan's proposal and said that if the Hindus accepted it the Muslims would join the Congress.

Sir Syed, however, did not sound very enthusiastic when he commented on the letter in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*. He approved of Ismail Khan's proposal but added that "the Hindu agitators should also move the Government to sanction the proposal". Without that, "a mere formal passing of the proposal by the Congress camp would amount to practically nothing".¹²²

In his Presidential Address, Sayani made a reference to Ismail Khan's letter but considered his proposal premature and rather impractical. "It is a good suggestion," he said, "but so long as Musalmans do not join the Congress movement in the same number and with the same enthusiasm as the Hindus do, the Congress cannot in fairness be asked to carry out such suggestion in the manner and to the extent indicated in the suggestion."¹²³ According to Ismail Khan, the acceptance of fifty-fifty political representation was a necessary prerequisite of the Muslims joining the Congress: Sayani, however, believed that it must be the other way round. There could, therefore, be no agreement.

Sayani devoted a large part of his address to a critical examination of the Muslim attitude to the Congress. He denied, at the outset, that all Muslims were against the Congress and inquired, how there could be such a positive attitude on their part when most Muslims, due to lack of education, had not even heard of the Congress movement. He knew that there were some Muslims, either educated in English or well-versed in Hindustani, who were against the Congress; indeed, they took delight in "abusing the Congress". But there were also some other Muslims, small in numbers at present but "destined soon to come to the front" who had educated themselves in the right direction and were with the Congress.

What were the objections of those Muslims who opposed the Congress? Sayani listed them one by one and discussed them

¹²¹ See the *Moslem Chronicle*, January 9, 1897.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ *Annual Congress Report* (1896), 1-39.

at length, summarising some of their most important objections as follows:

- (1) That it was anti-religious for the Muslims to join the Hindus.
- (2) That if the Muslims joined the Congress, Government would maltreat them at a time when for their very survival they needed Government's help.
- (3) That the success of the Congress would eventually end in the overthrow of the British and the substitution of Hindu rule.
- (4) That the Congress was not representative of all races of India; nor were its motives honest; nor its aims and objects, practical.
- (5) That the modes of Government prevailing in the West, namely, examination, representation and election, were not suited to India; and that if they were put into practice all Government offices would go to the Hindus and Muslims would be completely ousted from employment.
- (6) That the Hindus, being in an overwhelming majority in India, would always dominate the proceedings of the Congress and make that body an instrument of their own will and for their own benefit.

In his reply to these and other objections, Sayani said that though there was some truth in some of them, none of them was really tenable. He dismissed the first objection by saying that "the Congress has no concern whatever with the religion or the religious exercise of any of its members". The second objection was also unfounded because the purpose of the Congress was to ventilate "the grievances of the subjects in a legal and constitutional manner" and to remind the Government to fulfil the promises already made to the people. As regards the third objection, Sayani felt convinced that the success of the Congress "instead of weakening Government", would "only contribute towards the greater permanence of British rule in India". "The Musalmans, therefore", emphasised Sayani, "need not be frightened by phantoms created by their own imagination, phantoms which have no place in the realm of realities." The fourth objection was more a condemnation of

the action of Muslims who opposed the Congress than that of the Congress. If the Congress was not representative of all races, whose fault was it? The Congress had always stretched its hand of friendship and co-operation. As to the Congress motives being not honest, Sayani sincerely hoped that, unless the Muslims were prepared to substantiate their charge, they would refrain from such reckless and irresponsible talk. About the aims and objects of the Congress, he said, how practical they were had been well demonstrated by the recent constitutional and administrative changes. Discussing the fifth objection, Sayani gave a discourse on the democratic character of Islam and pointed out that "election and representation as also universal brotherhood are the characteristics of Islam and ought not to be objected to by Musalmans". As to competitive examinations, "if they want any position of rank, they must endeavour to be fit for such position. . . ." Refuting the last objection, Sayani reminded the Muslim opponents of the Congress that the Congress was not a meeting of shareholders in a joint stock company or any other body floated for the purpose of profits and gains. He was sure that the Congress would never be allowed "to run its course for the benefit of sectional, private or party purposes".

Sayani, therefore, advised his co-religionists that, "instead of raising puerile and imaginary objections from a distance", they should attend the Congress meetings and see for themselves what went on within its portals. Then they would know that every reasonable proposal was always given a most careful consideration by the Congress.

Sayani's plea, however, went unheeded. Instead of producing a response it infuriated a number of influential Muslims, who accused the Congress President of distorting facts and running away from the realities of the Indian situation. *The Moslem Chronicle*, in a series of editorials, tried to show "the many fallacies" in Sayani's arguments and accused him of being "Their Masters' Voice".¹²⁴ It characterised his address as unreasonable and untrue, full of "uncalled for abuses, invectives and vitu-

¹²⁴ There were three long editorials on Sayani's speech and these appeared in the *Moslem Chronicle* of January 30, February 20 and March 27, 1897.

peration" against his own co-religionists "for no other fault but because ninety-nine per cent of them have differed from him". If he really desired the co-operation of the Muslims, the newspaper asked, why did he evade Ismail Khan's challenge? "Surely, for the sake of his own reputation and for the sake of the Presidential Chair which he was called upon to adorn and for the sake of his own friends—the Congressites—who put him at the head of this annual meeting, the honourable gentleman should have thought twice and spared the incalculable mischief which his speech has done to the cause he meant to serve."¹²⁵

However, Sayani's address did inspire some Muslims to think seriously about the Congress. As one of them asked: "What have we gained by not joining the Congress?" Our main objection against that body, he said, was its demand for representative institutions; but could we prevent their introduction in India. In spite of Muslim resistance, the Government had acknowledged the principle not only in municipalities and local boards but also in legislative councils. Moreover, England, being herself a democracy, how could she refuse the claims of the Congress for long? To use the words of one Azad: "This tug of war between the Patricians and the Plebeians, so to speak, is sure to end in a victory for the latter, as in the natural course of events a representative and popular system of Government must supersede a despotic Government."¹²⁶ In the end the Muslims would be the main sufferers, being sure to be discarded by the British who would use the Muslims only so long as it helped them; and bound to be hated by the Hindus, "for having kept away from the Congress". Azad, therefore, pleaded for a rapprochement and reconciliation between the two communities before it proved too late.¹²⁷

But in this controversy, which was mainly carried on in the pages of the *Moslem Chronicle* and later copied by other Muslim newspapers—in particular the Urdu press—a majority of the Muslim participants violently disagreed with Azad and were satisfied that the policy of non-co-operation with the Congress had been in the best interests of their community.

¹²⁵ Ibid., February 6, 1897.

¹²⁶ Ibid., January 25, 1897.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

"Do you believe", one of them—Salahuddin—asked Azad, "that the Hindus are in a mood to welcome you as equals?" But what then was to be done by the Muslims? That was a fair question and Salahuddin had a simple reply: "Make yourself imperious and strong in your own castle and then snap your fingers at your foes."¹²⁸ One of the contributors to this controversy was Beck, who thought the Muslims had gained immensely in prestige and respect (as also in jobs) at the hands of the Government by having refused to join the people "who talk nonsense".¹²⁹ As to the allegation that the Government had accepted the principle of political representation, it was not true. The Congress asked for a majority of seats in the Councils; it only got a minority, leaving "all the power with the Government". There was, therefore, no "representation" in the true sense of the word.

All this, whatever be its merits or demerits, was hardly conducive to a proper understanding of the Hindu-Muslim differences which were being more and more embittered by "cow-killing" riots, quarrels over Government jobs, and communal nepotism in administration. To add to the difficulty, the Hindu press took a blatantly anti-Muslim attitude in the Græco-Turkish war, presumably because Gladstone was on the Greek side. When the Turks won a victory in Crete, Muslims in all big Indian cities celebrated the occasion with much gaiety and enthusiasm and sent greetings to the Sultan and offered thanksgiving prayers. *The Advocate* of Lucknow, on the other hand, accused Government of "exhibiting a weakness in allowing these meetings to be held", and asked:

Would Government have allowed these proceedings if the victories had been obtained over Russia or Germany? Government professes to be neutral, to have even sympathy with Greece, to be ready to join the powers in saving her if her liberties were seriously threatened. And yet it tolerates its subjects to proclaim its sympathy for one of the contending parties at a time when the war is only suspended. The

¹²⁸ Ibid., February 20, 1897.

¹²⁹ See his article entitled, "The Congress and the Muhammadans" in the *Moslem Chronicle*, February 13, 1897.

demonstrations we cannot but regard as indecent and disloyal. . . .¹³⁰

Because the Muslims in Bengal did not display the same exuberance as their co-religionists in other provinces, the *Indian Nation* congratulated them for their "decency and self-restraint".¹³¹ All this anti-Muslim propaganda was done, according to the *Moslem Chronicle*, to show to the Government that the Hindus were "more loyal than the hitherto known 'Loyal' Musalmans".¹³²

But despite their loyalty, the Muslims expressed strong resentment against the British for their partiality towards the Greeks; their feelings in this matter were so strong that *The Times* gave many grave warnings to the British Government and the press not to be too severe in their criticisms of Turkey because "a conviction . . . has spread throughout the Indian Musalmans that the English people are bent on destroying the Sultan. . . ." ¹³³ Under such circumstances the hostile criticisms of some of the Hindu newspapers infuriated many Muslims, who believed that the Hindus would always rejoice at the defeat of Islam anywhere.

Politically, therefore, Hindu-Muslim relations were at their worst at this time, which was also marked by a rather stiff attitude towards the Muslims by Lord Elgin. When he relinquished the Viceroyalty, the foremost Muslim organ heaved a sigh of relief and wrote that His Lordship's regime brought "some of the greatest calamities" on the Muslims, "calamities which brought nothing but woe and sorrow, ruin and trouble

¹³⁰ Quoted in the *Moslem Chronicle*, June 12, 1897. ¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. Also see editorials in the *Moslem Chronicle* of August 7 and 21, 1897.

¹³³ *The Times*, August 30, 1897, in an article entitled, "The Musalman Unrest". Also see *The Times*, December 28, 1895; and a leading article on the subject in *The Times*, August 21, 1897, in which the newspaper warned that "the attitude adopted by Her Majesty's Government in the latest phase of the peace negotiations in Eastern Europe is probably not calculated to arrest the operation of certain influences which are believed to have been more or less directly connected with recent manifestations of Musalman restlessness in India." Also see Ghulam-us-Saqlain's article, "The Musalmans of India and the Armenian Question", in the *Nineteenth Century*, June 1895, 925-39.

in their train, and have been attended with nothing but evil results."¹³⁴ Strong words for which there was little justification.¹³⁵ Elgin's rule was attended by many unfortunate happenings: famine, plague, and frontier troubles, but there was nothing specially anti-Muslim about the Viceroy's attitude except his disregard, or perhaps indifference, to adequate Muslim representation in his Legislative Councils. Elgin also did not show much enthusiasm for the Muslim demands for reservations and special treatment in other spheres of administration; hence the *Moslem Chronicle's* sigh of relief at the Viceroy's departure.

His successor, Lord Curzon, arrived in India on a Friday (January 6, 1899), a day always held auspicious by the Muslims. His Viceroyalty was therefore welcomed by the Muslim press as auguring well "for the poor and despised Musalman";¹³⁶ and also because of the fact that Curzon had intimate contacts with many Islamic countries, which he had personally visited. On his part the new Viceroy admitted in his reply to the "Address of Welcome" presented by the Central National Muhammadan Association that "my heart would be dull, did it not respond" and hoped that "The Deity whom we equally revere may look with blessing upon our respective labours".¹³⁷

¹³⁴ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 14, 1899.

¹³⁵ However Elgin himself was conscious of this Muslim feeling against his rule. For instance, in replying to the Address of the M.A.O. College on November 26, 1897, he remarked: "During the last few months, and at the present moment, the Government of India has, most unwillingly, been forced into open conflict with the tribes who belong to your community, and there have not been wanting those who have alleged that there was a real and growing antagonism between British rule in India and its Muhammadan subjects." See *Speeches by the Earl of Elgin*, 370. Again on December 31, 1898, while replying to the farewell address of the Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta, the Viceroy said: "I should be ungrateful indeed did I not acknowledge the very cordial terms in which you have addressed me on this occasion. It might conceivably have been otherwise. On two at least of the topics on which you have touched the course of events at one time threatened to bring the Government of India into conflict with Muhammadan sentiment." *Ibid.*, 473.

¹³⁶ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 14, 1899.

¹³⁷ For full text of the Address and the Viceroy's reply see the *Englishman*, February 1, 1899.

He was, however, not prepared to give the Muslims "exceptional advantages in the struggle for life". Of course they would get the necessary encouragement from his Government, which in fact they had been continuously getting, he emphasised, since the days of Lord Mayo. "I believe that the share given by the State to Muhammadans in its public service is both just and generous." Curzon told the Muslim deputation in no uncertain terms "that while your efforts are watched with a friendly eye by Government, the future rests for the most part in your own hands". The Muslim leaders were naturally disappointed but felt that "as His Excellency ages in Indian experience he will have to modify at least some of the observations"¹³⁸ made by him.

The feeling of frustration among the politically conscious Muslims was, however, real. Moreover, just at that time, came the death of Sir Syed, which left them truly orphaned. They did not know how to conduct themselves because for twenty years Sir Syed had single-handedly managed their affairs. He had been not only their guardian but the supreme protector of their rights and privileges. His influence with the Government was such that he had no difficulty in protecting the interests of his co-religionists. His death created a void, which was too big to be filled by any of his colleagues. Neither did he leave behind any proper political organisation which could carry on his work.

Perhaps no one was more worried at the turn of events than Beck. He knew that the situation could get out of control and took the lead in preventing this, working harder than ever before. He appealed to the Muslims for a memorial fund for Sir Syed and initiated the idea of turning the M.A.O. College into a full-fledged Muslim University.¹³⁹ Beck was convinced that, if the energies of the educated Muslims were not diverted towards this channel, they were bound to join in political agita-

¹³⁸ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 4, 1899.

¹³⁹ See the *M.A.O. College Magazine*, edited by Beck and Shibli, April 1898.

tion, which he sincerely believed would undermine their position with the Government.¹⁴⁰

Beck worked so hard that his health broke down and within less than a year he followed his master to the grave. His death, so soon after that of Sir Syed, came as a shock to his colleagues and students. It was mourned from the Viceroy¹⁴¹ down to the lowest of the educated Muslims at Aligarh. Among educated Muslims at other places the loss was felt no less intensely.¹⁴² In fact at one of the memorial meetings Mohsinul Mulk publicly confessed that after the death of Sir Syed it was to Beck that the Muslims turned "for no man except Sir Syed had worked with such zeal and unselfish devotion for their cause".¹⁴³ The Nawab also pointed out that there had never been such universal grief among the Muslims at the death of any one before, Sir Syed alone excepted.

At the same meeting Morison also emphasised that next to Sir Syed no man cared for the Muslims more than Beck, who was "not a Musalman . . . [and] . . . upon whose devotion neither by birth nor by religion the Musalmans of India had any claim".¹⁴⁴ More than Rs. 8,000 were subscribed there and then to the Beck Memorial Fund and the expressions of grief at the meeting were so profound that Sir Arthur Strachey, the Chief of Justice of the N.W.P., who presided, was so moved that he had no doubts "that for all time Theodore Beck will stand side by side with Sir Syed Ahmed in the grateful recollection of the Muhammadans for the great impulse which they jointly gave to the cause of national regeneration."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ See Beck's speech at the Muhammadan Educational Conference held during Xmas week of 1898 in Lahore.

¹⁴¹ Lord and Lady Curzon were among the mourners and the Viceroy's Law Member, Raleigh was one of the pall-bearers at Beck's funeral. See the *Pioneer*, September 6, 1899.

¹⁴² See editorial on his death in the *Moslem Chronicle*, September 9, 1899 and reports of Muslim condolence meetings held at Meerut, Lahore, Simla, Shahjahanpur and Aligarh in the *Pioneer* of September 10, 13, 15, 16 and 20, 1899 respectively. Also for reports of similar meetings at Dera Ghazi Khan, Ludhiana, Delhi and Bangalore, see the *Moslem Chronicle*, September 23, 1899.

¹⁴³ *The Pioneer*, November 29, 1899. ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, November 29, 1899.

With the beginning of the twentieth century, which saw many political and economic changes in India, uneasiness among the educated Muslims began to mount and they wished for a political organisation like the Congress which could espouse their cause. They were no longer content to leave their fate in the hands of a few leaders who lacked the necessary qualifications to satisfy their new-born aspirations. Some of the younger Muslims even suggested that the best course for the Muslims was to join the Congress in large numbers, play their part in its activities, and so ensure the protection of their rights and interests.¹⁴⁶

These men were strengthened in their conviction by the sorry plight of the Muslims at the hands of Sir Anthony MacDonnel, Lt. Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during the Hindi-Urdu controversy, when at a mild threat from Sir Anthony their leaders retreated from their stand and openly betrayed the cause of Urdu. After that, the educated Muslims felt convinced that, unless they organised themselves properly, their leaders would let them down whenever some such occasion arose.

The rapid progress of the Hindus in political affairs, despite the seditious methods of some of their leaders, was another disconcerting pointer.

As Alfred Nundy, making a case for the Congress in the columns of the *Pioneer*, explained: "Not only is the Hindu progressing without their aid but is turning aggressive towards them, with the help of the very Government" which had patronised the Muslims till then.¹⁴⁷ He said that among many Muslim leaders there was a growing realisation that without Hindu-Muslim unity, which could only be brought about by the Congress, political progress was not possible. Of such leaders Nundy mentioned the Nawabs Mohsinul Mulk, Fateh Nawaz Jung and Imadul Mulk.

¹⁴⁶ See the report of a speech delivered by Syed Ali Bilgrami, at a meeting held at Secunderabad, to express condolences on the death of Mr. Justice Ranade in the *Kayastha Samachar*, March 1901, 194.

¹⁴⁷ *The Pioneer*, December 9, 1900. Commenting on this the *Bengalee* also opined that the recent events had come as "a rude awakening" to the Muslims. (*The Bengalee*, December 11, 1900).

Nundy's analysis of the role of these leaders was not correct. His contention was, therefore, immediately challenged by Nawab Imadul Mulk and Nawab Mohsinul Mulk, the former maintaining that the Muslims would never join the ranks of "dark-skinned Steads and Parnells".¹⁴⁸

The Muslims, said Nawab Imadul Mulk, were better employed in setting their own house in order. "We have therefore made it our business", he wrote, "to teach our political creed at Aligarh so that the rising generation should grow up in its doctrines, which we deem to be sounder and much more patriotic than the doctrines taught by the Congress. Mr. Morison is charged with that propaganda as was the late Mr. Beck before him and he has the authority of the leaders of the community to speak on their behalf and he has their fullest confidence."¹⁴⁹

Promptly Mohsinul Mulk also issued a reply to Nundy from Aligarh and explained how the Muslim attitude regarding the Congress had "altered not a whit by recent events".¹⁵⁰ Though Sir Syed was dead, emphasised Mohsinul Mulk, his opinions were still alive among his people and they were, therefore, not going to depart from the policy laid down by their greatest guide. But notwithstanding these statements, the *Moslem Chronicle*, the foremost Muslim organ, agreed, though not fully, with Nundy's analysis and described the prevalent attitude of the Muslims towards the Congress as "one of passive indifference".¹⁵¹

Nundy was furious with the Nawabs when he found how utterly wrong he was in his estimate of them. "It is a little too much on their part", he wrote, "to claim a monopoly of loyalty, and it is time the farce was finished especially when capital is made out of it to the detriment of other communities."¹⁵²

But whatever might have been the change in the political situation, there was no question of the Muslims joining the

¹⁴⁸ *The Pioneer*, January 25, 1901.

¹⁴⁹ Nawab Imadul Mulk was at this time one of the most important trustees of the M.A.O. College.

¹⁵⁰ *The Pioneer*, January 26, 1901.

¹⁵¹ See an editorial on the subject in the *Moslem Chronicle*, December 15, 1900.

¹⁵² *The Pioneer*, February 2, 1901.

Congress. Such a move would not have proved popular with them even at that stage. The need, however, of organising the Muslims politically was strongly felt and there was a persistent clamour for it. In fact Morison became so alarmed at this "unrest and desire for political organisation" among the Muslims that he warned them that they would not be able to carry out in practice such an ambitious programme. He knew how easy it was to form an association because that only consisted in enrolling some members and electing a secretary; but difficulties arose when work had to be done. Did the Muslims have any money? Any workers . . .? How could they then form a Muhammadan Political Association, he asked.¹⁵³

There was also the danger, in case the Muslims formed such an association, of the Government scrutinising their claims because the Government would refuse to show any more "consideration to a party that was continually abusing and carping at it". Then it was bound to result in their losing "the sympathy of a great many officials". In consequence, the entire structure of loyalty to the British, built up so assiduously by Sir Syed, would collapse, bringing sorrow and misery to the Indian Muslims. Morison, therefore, entreated them "to count the cost before entering on a path which Sir Syed Ahmed warned them not to tread".

He was, however, aware that the urge among the Muslims for some such movement was so great that it could not be ignored. Consequently he suggested the formation of a "small council of leaders", with a paid secretary, who should look after the political interests of the Muslims. The "Council" could be housed in two rooms with a library and a publishing bureau, which would issue pamphlets and send articles to English and Urdu newspapers interested in Muslim affairs. All this would involve the "Council", according to Morison, in an expenditure of Rs. 500 per month.¹⁵⁴

The "Council" could review the political situation occasionally but was to curb with a strong hand any form of political

¹⁵³ Morison wrote two articles on the subject entitled: "Political Action by Muhammadans" in the *Pioneer* of September 14 and 21, 1901.

¹⁵⁴ *The Pioneer*, September 21, 1901.

agitation. It was not to indulge in criticism of official actions; on the contrary, before indulging in it, each member should ask himself: "If I were Lieutenant Governor, what should I do?" If the "Council" could function in this way, Morison had no doubts that its leading members would be invited to sit on the Viceroy's Council.¹⁵⁵

But despite Morison's warnings and the indifference of Muslim leaders at Aligarh, the movement for organising the Muslims politically gathered momentum. As new developments began to take place in Indian administration it was found that the existing organisations, notably the Central National Muhammadan Association and the Muhammadan Literary Society, were unable to cope with them. In fact by 1900, the Central National Muhammadan Association had so completely fallen in the esteem of not only the Muslims but also the Government, which was its chief patron, that the *Moslem Chronicle*, in an impassioned editorial, asked for its complete overhaul if it were to render any useful service to the Muslim cause.¹⁵⁶ The position of the Muhammadan Literary Society was much worse. Its secretary was publicly accused in the columns of the *Englishman* of Calcutta of auctioning and selling important books and documents sent by the Government for the library of the Society;¹⁵⁷ while, when the Secretary of State for India quoted the Society's views on some matter, the *Moslem Chronicle* wondered why "none of the many inquisitive members of Parliament asked Lord George Hamilton to explain how the 'Literary' Society came to be the exponent of the political views of the Muhammadans."¹⁵⁸ The Society had been doing that kind of job for more than thirty years; but with the passage of time it had become ineffective and obscure.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ See the editorial, "Our Associations" in the *Moslem Chronicle*, August 4, 1900.

¹⁵⁷ See Charles W. McMinn's letter to the *Englishman*, August 1, 1900, and also the reply by A. F. M. Abdur Rahman in the *Englishman*, August 2, 1900. Also see editorial comments in the *Bengalee*, August 2, 1900.

¹⁵⁸ *The Moslem Chronicle*, August 4, 1900. *The Bengalee* also made fun of the Society saying that "its sole function" was "the giving of addresses and the praising of officials". See the *Bengalee*, April 9, 1899.

All this made the thoughtful among the Muslims more determined to establish what Mian Muhammad Shafi in the *Punjab Observer* called "a systematic political organisation amongst the Musalmans of India". At first some Muslim leaders, including Mohsinul Mulk opposed this, saying that any kind of political agitation would be fatal to the welfare of the Muslims. But the "unrest" was so widespread that it could not be checked and had to be faced even by those who did not like it.

But what should be the nature of such an organisation? A controversy raged over this.¹⁵⁹ There were some, like Nawab Mehdi Husain of Lucknow,¹⁶⁰ who wanted to make common cause with the Hindus; some like Morison and Mohsinul Mulk, who revived the old idea of a Grand Council of chosen leaders to look after the Muslims;¹⁶¹ while there were others, perhaps more numerous than all the rest, who desired the formation of a Muslim political organisation, more or less on the same lines as the Indian National Congress but much more loyal to the British.¹⁶² Moreover, this last group was gaining in popularity among the educated Muslims with the result that the idea of a "Muhammadan Political Association" was actively discussed at a meeting attended by some leading Muslims at Lucknow in November 1901.¹⁶³

This idea was not given concrete shape till July 1903 when the Muhammadan Political Association was formed at a public meeting of the Muslims held at Saharanpur (in U.P.). It was convened by Nawab Viqar-ul Mulk,¹⁶⁴ who, in a letter to the *Pioneer*, explained that it had no connection whatsoever with the Congress. "The two movements", wrote the Nawab, "are essentially different, not only in their most important objects,

¹⁵⁹ That Shafi's views created some kind of excitement among the educated Muslims is also borne out by the Prospectus of the All-India Muslim League as to the beginnings of political organisation among the Muslims.

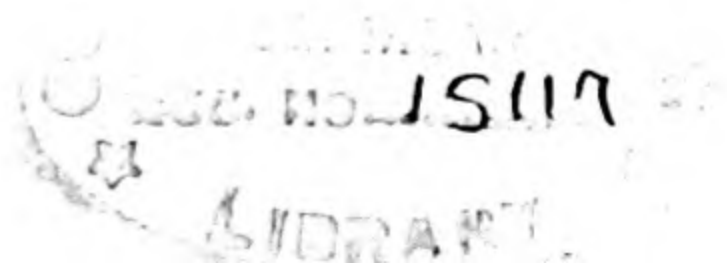
¹⁶⁰ See his letter in the *Pioneer*, April 14, 1901.

¹⁶¹ See the *Pioneer*, September 14, 1901.

¹⁶² The initiative in this matter was taken by Mian (later Sir) Muhammad Shafi, who popularised the idea by his contributions to the *Punjab Observer*.

¹⁶³ See "Rules and Regulations of the All-India Muslim League". Also see an article "Indian Musalmans and Indian Politics" in the *Hindustan Review*, February 1909, 143-5.

¹⁶⁴ See his letter in the *Pioneer*, August 16, 1903.



but also in their *modus operandi*." The Muhammadan Political Association defined its aims and objects as follows:

- (1) To impress upon the Muslims that their well-being and prosperity depended entirely on the stability and permanence of British rule in India;
- (2) To lay in a moderate and respectful manner the grievances of Muslims before the Government;
- (3) To refrain from assuming hostile attitudes towards other communities;
- (4) To oppose the main demands of the Congress regarding representative government and competitive examinations.¹⁶⁵

The Association, however, proved still-born. It was entrusted to wrong hands; it failed to produce the necessary response. Consequently, it did not do much work and little was heard of it.

The next move which gave some fillip to the awakening of political consciousness among the Muslims was the partition of Bengal, which was interpreted both by officials and some Muslim leaders as being all to the good of the Muslims because in the new province of Eastern Bengal they would be in a majority of more than sixty per cent, and in consequence would have a much greater share in its control and administration than they could ever hope to in a united Bengal.¹⁶⁶ Not all the Muslim leaders, however, were taken in by these arguments and the *Moslem Chronicle* strongly condemned the scheme of partition.¹⁶⁷ But the Central National Muhammadan Association and the Muhammadan Literary Society welcomed the creation of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and

¹⁶⁵ *The Pioneer*, July 31, 1903.

¹⁶⁶ "Fully resolved to crush this new spirit by dividing the people against themselves, Lord Curzon proceeded to East Bengal and there, at large meetings of Muhammadans, especially convened for the purpose, explained to them that his object in partitioning Bengal was not only to relieve the Bengal administration but also to create a Muhammadan province where Islam could be predominant and its followers in the ascendency" Mazumdar in his *Indian National Evolution*, 207. Also see Nevins's *The New Spirit in India*, 11 and 168; and Bannerjee's *A Nation in Making*, 185, 188 and 191.

¹⁶⁷ *The Moslem Chronicle*, November 11, 1905.

appealed to all local leaders in the various districts of Bengal "to exert your great influence to prevent all ignorant members of the Muhammadan community of your district from directly or indirectly opposing the policy (of partition)."¹⁶⁸ But despite the efforts of some Muslim leaders, a good many Muslims joined the swadeshi movement, which was the spearhead of the anti-partition agitation. In fact, according to Surendranath Banerjea, out of the 259 anti-Partition demonstrations, 135 were the joint work of Hindus and Muslims; while such important anti-Partition meetings, as those held in Calcutta, Dacca, Faridpur and Mymensing, were all presided over by prominent Muslim leaders of Bengal.¹⁶⁹

The "loyalists" among the Bengali Muslims, however, were not much worried about this. They were more concerned about the consolidation of their forces in the new province, where, in its first Lt.-Governor, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, they found a most willing patron of their cause. Efforts were consequently made to form a Muhammadan Union which was to be, in effect, a counter-movement against the agitation for a United Bengal. It held its inaugural meeting on October 16, 1905 under the patronage of Nawab Salimullah Bahadur of Dacca. But the move soon fizzled out, perhaps because it did not have much active support among the educated Bengali Muslims.¹⁷⁰

Meanwhile the anti-Partition movement went on gathering momentum till it forced the resignation of Sir Bampfylde Fuller.¹⁷¹ Nawab Khawaja Samiulla of Dacca and his friends were naturally upset at this development and they organised a mass meeting of about 30,000 Muslims at Shahbagh in Dacca "to protest against the weak policy of the Government of India in accepting the resignation of Sir Bampfylde Fuller without any regard for Muhammadan interests and to express their profound sorrow at the departure of such a popular administrator."¹⁷² The chairman described the occasion as "a great national calamity" for the Muslims and the meeting recorded

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. ¹⁶⁹ *Annual Congress Report*, 76-77.

¹⁷⁰ *The Pioneer*, October 18, 1905.

¹⁷¹ See an article entitled "The Unrest in Bengal" in *The Times*, London, October 3, 1905.

¹⁷² *The Pioneer*, August 8, 1906.

its disapproval "of a system of government which maintains no continuity of policy."

Coming as it did, soon after the Hindi-Urdu agitation in the United Provinces, this was another blow to the Muslims, who were becoming more and more distrustful of the Government. Moreover, Tilak's activities in giving an aggressive colour to Hinduism, which became as anti-Muslim as anti-British, frightened many Muslim leaders who were now convinced that if the Indian Muslims did not safeguard their interests properly and on their own, they were doomed. There was, therefore, a growing demand for some kind of political organisation which could tackle their problems. Some among them pleaded for affiliation with the Congress as the best course, but there were many others who maintained that the Indian Muslims must have their own political organisation, which could look after their political rights and interests as distinct from those of the Hindus.

In the meantime the Congress leaders tried hard to present India as one nation.¹⁷³ Politically, they maintained, both Hindus and Muslims, were one; and the Congress represented both, despite the fact, that many politically conscious Muslims refuted this claim and worked against it. For instance in 1903 there were not even 10 Muslim delegates out of 538 at its annual meeting;¹⁷⁴ in 1904 there were 30 Muslim delegates out of 1,010;¹⁷⁵ and in 1905, at the Congress session held in Banaras, there were only 20 Muslim delegates out of 757.¹⁷⁶ But notwithstanding the poor number of Muslim delegates at the Congress sessions—which could have been due to some other reasons as well—it must be admitted that since the death of Sir Syed there was much less open hostility against the Congress on the part of the Muslims. The Muslim press was also not as anti-Congress as before and there were even some occasional demands from some Muslim leaders for Hindu-Muslim unity and Congress-Muslim co-operation.¹⁷⁷ Even some orthodox Muslims

¹⁷³ See the Presidential Address of Surendranath Banerjea in the *Annual Congress Report* (1895), 15. ¹⁷⁴ Ibid. (1903), Appendix (I).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. (1904), Appendix (A). ¹⁷⁶ Ibid. (1905), Appendix (A).

¹⁷⁷ This fact was admitted by the *Moslem Chronicle* in an editorial on December 15, 1900.

advocated alliance with the Congress on the ground that the Muslims in India were faced with two kinds of *Jehad*: (1) *Jehad-e-Asgar* (or small struggle) which is in defence of religious rights and liberty; and (2) *Jehad-e-Akbar* (or big struggle) which includes representation to the ruler for the redress of grievances and wrongs suffered by his subjects. The Congress could claim, declared some of the Ulama, the support of all Muslims in regard to this *Jehad-e-Akbar*.¹⁷⁸

In consequence of this change of feeling among a substantial section of Muslims, there were at the Twenty-second Congress at Calcutta about 50 Muslim delegates, including such promising young men as Wazir Hasan, M. A. Jinnah and Abbas Tyabjee.¹⁷⁹ It was also at this session that the Congress raised its voice against the Privy Council decisions on *Wakf-alal aulad*¹⁸⁰ and thus gained more Muslim sympathy to its cause. According to Surendranath Banerjea more than 200 Muslim visitors attended this Congress; while there were 100 Muslim volunteers out of 300.¹⁸¹

One of Jinnah's first acts at this Congress was to move an amendment to the official resolution on "Self-Government or Swaraj", asking for the deletion of the clause which made provision for the reservation of seats in the legislatures and services for "the educationally backward classes in India". Addressing the gathering on his amendment, Jinnah declared:

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Muhammadan community should be treated in the same way as the Hindu community. The foundation upon which the Indian National Congress is based is that we are all equal, that there should be no reservation for any class or community.¹⁸²

The amendment was passed unanimously and incorporated in the main resolution.

¹⁷⁸ See the *Bengalee*, December 16, 1900.

¹⁷⁹ All the three subsequently played a prominent part in Indian politics, Wazir Hasan and M. A. Jinnah becoming Presidents of the All-India Muslim League.

¹⁸⁰ For an appreciation of this issue from the Muslim point of view see Ameer Ali's article, "An Indian Retrospect" in the *Nineteenth Century*, October 1905, 618-20.

¹⁸¹ *Annual Congress Report* (1905), 76-7.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 120.

However this was no reflection of the prevailing trend among the Muslim leaders, particularly those of Aligarh, who were still against any kind of political unity with the Hindus. True, some sort of political organisation had become urgent and inevitable but they wanted it exclusively for the Muslims. They received in this much encouragement from the Nawab of Dacca and the young Aga Khan. The former's initiative and the latter's guidance stimulated the Muslim leaders into instant action. From London Ameer Ali broadcast their sentiments in a vigorously written article for the *Nineteenth Century*. He said:

. . . the Indian Muslims are suffering acutely from political inanition. Material decadence and general want of touch with modern thought have brought about a deplorable state of disintegration. The associations that exist in different parts of the country possess no solidarity and display no conception of the essential requirements of the community. There is no concerted action to prevent further decline of their people, to promote their advancement, to place before Government their considered views on public matters or to obtain relief from the mischiefs arising from the misunderstanding of their laws and customs.

Ameer Ali, therefore, urged upon the Muslims to organise themselves into a distinct political group; otherwise "the feelings of the masses are likely to take a wrong shape and find outlet through unregulated channels".¹⁸³

The widespread talk about the forthcoming reforms provided an ideal opportunity for such a move. Furthermore, in the new Viceroy, Lord Minto, the Muslims found a sympathetic friend, who, according to his biographer, "had a liking for the Muhammadans".¹⁸⁴ Lord Mayo, the new Secretary of State, was also well disposed towards them. As he revealed to Lady Minto in a delightful letter, "I think I like Muhammadans but I cannot go much further than that in an easterly direction."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ See Ameer Ali's article, "India and the New Parliament" in the *Nineteenth Century*, August 1906, 257-58.

¹⁸⁴ John Buchan, *Lord Minto*, 243. ¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 223.

Thus encouraged, the Muslim leaders decided to wait upon the Viceroy in a deputation and place before him their special claims. Arrangements were made to collect as big a contingent in Simla as possible and a carefully worded draft was prepared.¹⁸⁶ The Congress leaders were naturally worried about these developments; they suspected that once again the Muslims were being put up as opponents of political reforms. Hence in the columns of his *Bengalee* Surendranath Banerjea appealed to the Muslim leaders to co-operate with the Hindus in presenting a united front to the Government. He wrote:

We shall be prepared to meet our Muhammadan brethren half way in this as in all other matters. . . . The question as to what proportion of Muhammadan members would be held to be adequate could be decided by a frank interchange of views between Hindus and Muhammadans. We desire to invite their co-operation on the following points:

- (1) That Hindu and Muhammadan Councillors should be elected by the joint votes of Hindus and Muhammadans;
- (2) That the Hindus would be prepared to allow the Muhammadans their fair share of representation;
- (3) That differences of race and creed should not be allowed to dominate the larger and vital interests of India;
- (4) That there should be mutual trust and hearty co-operation between the two great communities without which no real or lasting advance is possible in the present circumstances of the country;
- (5) That neither of the two communities should ever play into the hands of any repressive or retrogressive Government;

¹⁸⁶ According to the Prospectus of the All-India Muslim League, "their private activity was incessant for many weeks before the interview with the Viceroy. The Muhammadan Associations and Anjumans, and leading Muhammadans all over India were consulted. The draft memorial was submitted and carefully scrutinised and discussed in every centre of Muhammadanism from Peshawar to Madras; and there was much correspondence and consideration before it assumed its final form. A committee which included many leading Muhammadans assembled at Lucknow a week or two before to make the concluding arrangements." See the "Rules and Regulations of the All-India Muslim League" (1907).

(6) That in any case they should never cry out whenever any undue favour is shown by the Government to either of them;

(7) That at all events the Hindus and Muhammadans should work harmoniously together to achieve the following ends:

- (a) Elementary education, free and compulsory.
- (b) Extension of technical and scientific education.
- (c) Economic development of India—agricultural, industrial and commercial.
- (d) A wise and well-considered extension of irrigation.
- (e) Fostering of the Swadeshi movement.
- (f) Formation of joint stock companies to exploit the natural resources of the country and to give an impetus to trade.
- (g) Sixty-year revenue settlements instead of the present thirty-year settlements.
- (h) Enlargement of the powers and functions of the Legislative Councils as well as of their representation.
- (i) Extended employment of Indians in the higher branches of the Public Services.
- (j) Establishment of a Military College for the education of the young scions of the aristocracy.¹⁸⁷

Banerjea's appeal did not evoke much response and the Muslim leaders went ahead with their plans. In consequence, on October 1, 1906, about fifty Muslim leaders from all over India saw Minto in a deputation and presented him a memorial incorporating their special demands. In his reply the Viceroy assured them that "... I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ *The Bengalee*, September 13, 1906.

¹⁸⁸ For full text of the memorial and the Viceroy's reply see Appendix E.

Fine sentiments, but the Muslim leaders seem to have read too much into them. The words, no doubt, conveyed sympathy but there was no assurance of communal representation. *The Muslim Patriot*, therefore, condemned the deputation as "a failure" and called upon the Muslims "to agitate, agitate and agitate until their united representations are heard in full and moderate demands are granted in entirety."¹⁸⁹

However, the British officials were extremely happy at the turn of events; as one of them wrote to Lady Minto immediately after the departure of the Muslim deputation:

I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the 'pulling' back of sixty-two million people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.¹⁹⁰

Nor was its importance minimised at Whitehall or by the British press. In fact *The Times* eagerly hailed the memorial as "the only piece of original political thought which has emanated from modern India";¹⁹¹ while Morley wrote to Minto:

All that you tell me of your Muhammadans is full of interest and I only regret that I could not have moved about unseen at your garden party. The whole thing has been as good as it could be and it stamps your position and authority decisively. Among other good effects of your deliverance is this that it has completely deranged the plans and tactics of the critic faction here, that is to say it has prevented them from any longer representing the Indian Government as the ordinary case of bureaucracy versus the people. I hope that even my stout radical friends will see that the problem is not quite so simple as this.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ *The Muslim Patriot*, October 5, 1906. Also see an editorial entitled, "Indian Nationality", in the *Muslim Patriot*, November 30, 1906. For Congress reactions to the deputation see editorial comments in the *Bengalee*, October 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1906.

¹⁹⁰ Lady Minto's *India, Minto and Morley*, 47-48.

¹⁹¹ *The Times*, October 2, 1906.

¹⁹² Lady Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, 48.

On the Muslim leaders also the effect of this event was tremendous; it goaded them into action as nothing before ever did. Within less than three days of their seeing the Viceroy they decided to form a central political organisation.¹⁹³ The Nawab of Dacca circulated among the various Muslim organisations his scheme of an All-Indian Muhammadan Confederacy with its dual object of safeguarding Muslim interests and the British Raj.¹⁹⁴ Plans were set afoot to launch the new movement in a proper manner. Finally, on December 31, 1906, after the conclusion of the Muslim Educational Conference at Dacca, a special meeting was called of all the delegates to that Conference as well as of other prominent Muslims to announce the formation of a political association.

The Nawab Viqar-ul Mulk, who presided on the occasion, emphasised that "so much was their cause bound up with that of the British Raj that they must be prepared to fight and die for the Government if necessary." Their motto was "defence, not defiance"; the Viqar-ul Mulk referred in enthusiastic terms to the Simla deputation and said that the present meeting was the logical consequence of it.¹⁹⁵

The Nawab of Dacca, who was the chief organiser of the meeting,¹⁹⁶ explained why the Muslims had decided upon set-

¹⁹³ The Indian correspondent of *The Times* reported five days after the deputation that "the Muhammadan delegates assembled here have discussed informally the question of forming an association with a view to safeguarding the interests of the community throughout India. It was decided in the first place to organise provincial associations which should send representatives to a central body." (*The Times*, October 6, 1906). Also see a similar report in the *Englishman*, October 6, 1906, wherein its correspondent reported that "the Muhammadan gentlemen who went on deputation to the Viceroy have apparently determined not to let the grass grow under their feet."

¹⁹⁴ In the shape that the Muslim League finally took at its formation, the Nawab of Dacca's scheme played a great part. See a summary of the scheme in the Appendix. Also see editorial comments on the proposed "All-India Muhammadan Confederacy" in the *Indian Spectator*, December 22, 1906, and in the *Bengalee*, December 14, 1906.

¹⁹⁵ *The Pioneer*, January 2, 1907. Also see *The Times*, January 2, 1907.

¹⁹⁶ For an appreciation of the Nawab's part in the whole affair see Moulvi Rafiuddin Ahmed's interview on the formation of the League in the *Englishman*, January 4, 1907. *The Bengalee* referred to the League as "Nawab Samiulla's latest fad". (*The Bengalee*, January 10, 1907).

ting up a new organisation. "Had the party now in power in England", he said, "been familiar with the position of Muslims and had Indian public men represented justly Muslim claims, the movement might perhaps not have been heard of, but quiet, unobtrusive work was now at a discount and only those who cried loudest had a chance of being heard. Muslims had, therefore, been forced against their own wishes to abandon their traditional policy in order to secure easement of very real disabilities, and to avoid the danger that their interest might be neglected, whilst other communities in India benefitted."¹⁹⁷

After a few more speeches the following resolution was unanimously passed by those present:

That this meeting, composed of Musalmans from all parts of India, assembled at Dacca, decides that a Political Association styled the All-India Muslim League be formed for the furtherance of the following objects:

- (a) To promote among the Musalmans of India feelings of loyalty to the British Government and to remove any misconceptions that may arise as to the intentions of Government with regard to any of its measures;
- (b) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Musalmans of India and respectfully to represent their needs and aspirations to Government;
- (c) To prevent the rise among the Musalmans of India of any feelings of hostility towards other communities, without prejudice to other objects of the League.¹⁹⁸

This resolution was moved by the Nawab of Dacca and seconded by Hakim Ajmal Khan.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ *The Pioneer*, January 2, 1907. Soon after the Nawab circulated among the leading Muslims detailed proposals for a central political organisation and pointed out how "in several instances much mischief has been done through irresponsible persons and small unimportant associations addressing Government and the public who have had no means of judging how far the views expressed were consonant with the general trend of Muhammadan opinion." (*The Times*, January 8, 1906). Also see a report of the Nawab's speech at Munshigunj in *The Times*, January 19, 1907.

¹⁹⁸ *The Pioneer*, January 2, 1907.

¹⁹⁹ Hakim Ajmal Khan later left the League and joined the Congress, becoming its President.

At the same meeting Nawabs Viqar-ul Mulk and Mohsinul Mulk were elected the Joint Secretaries of a Provisional Committee which was authorised to draft a suitable constitution and to make necessary arrangements for the future work of the League.

Thus was born at Dacca, on December 31, 1906, The All-India Muslim League.

But at the same time that this momentous event was taking place in the capital of Eastern Bengal, another Muslim meeting was being held in Calcutta. It had also been called for the same purpose; to quote the words of the organisers, "to consider what should be the attitude of the Muhammadan community towards the political and economic movements of the day".²⁰⁰ Presided over by Maulvi Ghulam Ahmed Khan, a zamindar of Berar, it was attended by a number of delegates from Bombay, Baroda, the U.P., Madras, the C.P., the Punjab, Bihar and Bengal. However, despite some publicity in the Congress press, it did not attract much attention. At any rate, not much enthusiasm was shown towards it by the educated Muslims.

Among the resolutions adopted by this latter meeting was one which called upon the Muslims "to work with other communities in all political and economic matters because the interests of the Muslims were in no way different from those of others".²⁰¹ To propagate this point of view, which was opposed to that of the League, a new political organisation under the name, Indian Musalman Association, was launched. Of course it was also to "ventilate the special grievances of the Muslims" and to "safeguard their legitimate interests". But this was to be done in collaboration with the other communities. A Provisional Committee of 26 members was set up to make

²⁰⁰ See the *Bengalee*, January 9, 1907. Commenting on the formation of the Indian Musalman Association, the newspaper remarked that "the new Association is destined, ere long, to become a powerful factor in initiating progressive movements and promoting whatever tends to the well-being and advancement of the Muhammadan community."

²⁰¹ Ibid.

preliminary arrangements and to call at a future date a more representative gathering to finalise the plan. Nawab Syed Mahomed was elected the President of the Committee and Kazi Kabiruddin, Abbas Tyabjee and M. A. Jinnah its Vice-Presidents. A. Rasul was appointed to act as the Secretary.

Apparently all this was in the nature of a counter-move against the newly formed Muslim League; some section of the Urdu press even blamed the Congress for having engineered it. "Having failed to win over the Muslims", wrote a Muslim newspaper, "the Congress is now trying to set the Muslims against the Muslims." Moreover, opposition to the formation of the new League came from such influential quarters as the *Statesman* which accused the Nawab of Dacca of turning the "educated Jekyll" into the "political Hyde". It also condemned in the same editorial the "systematic attempts" that were being made for some time by certain interested parties to set Hindus and Muslims against each other, adding, referring to the failure of earlier such attempts, "we hope that no better fate is in store for this last attempt to set the two communities at each other's throats".²⁰²

Even in the British Press the new League did not have a favourable reception. *The Times*, though welcoming its formation as a check against the "extravagant and ludicrous" claims of the Congress, doubted whether it would make for peace.²⁰³ But, curiously enough, the staunchest opposition came from one of the most conservative of the British newspapers, the *Morning Post*. It warned the League that its work must be

²⁰² *The Statesman* (Weekly), January 24, 1907. In its comments on the League, the *Bengalee* alleged: "It is significant that the League and its branches are engineered mostly by Government pensioners or ex-officials or gentlemen who are compelled to solicit Government assistance in their family or pecuniary difficulties." (*The Bengalee*, January 18, 1907).

²⁰³ *The Times*, January 2, 1907. However the *Englishman* assured *The Times* that "unless the League permits itself to be captured by the Congress . . . the new body is a thing not only to be welcomed with cordiality but to be fostered for it is in its essence sane not hysterical, solid not frothy, sensible not absurd, representative not artificial." (*The Englishman*, January 5, 1907).

"entirely defensive and protective", adding "once, however, it departs from these objects . . . and becomes frankly antagonistic to the Hindu or any other race, or by words or acts does anything to foment internal dissension in India, it will call at once for the most drastic intervention of the British rulers."²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ *The Morning Post*, January 19, 1907.

CHAPTER THREE

Constitutional Progress

BEFORE Lord Ripon became the Governor-General of India popular representation in any part of the governmental machinery hardly existed. The British raj, for all practical purposes, was a close preserve of the white man.¹ Not only the Central but the Provincial and District administrations were under the exclusive control of the British or the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy, whose grip was well maintained even in remote villages.

¹ In 1868 an interesting Blue Book entitled, *Correspondence respecting British and Native Systems of Government in India*, was published. Various minutes were written by Anglo-Indian officers of experience and various opinions were given but on one point there was a remarkable consensus: that the greatest Indian grievance consisted in the exclusion of "natives" from the higher posts of the administration and the increased want of touch between the Government and the governed.

Ripon's immediate predecessor, Lord Lytton, has left us an interesting account of the high and mighty ways of officialdom while dealing with the "natives", in some of his picturesque letters to his chiefs and friends.²

Here and there municipal institutions, of a kind, did exist. In fact there was an Order of the Court of Directors, as early as in 1687, which enjoined the formation of a corporation of European and Indian members for the City of Madras. Then came the Regulating Act of 1773, which created a system of Justices of Peace, to be followed almost a century later, in 1856, by the appointment of municipal commissioners in Presidency towns. Five years afterwards, the Calcutta, Bombay and Madras municipalities were remodelled to suit local conditions.

But all these measures were confined to Presidency towns: otherwise, there was little municipal activity and the general Municipal Act of 1850 remained a dead letter.³ Subsequently some Provincial Acts were passed (mostly between 1871 and 1874) which were further reinforced in practice by the famous scheme of financial decentralisation inaugurated by Lord Mayo. All these steps were taken with a view to strengthen local self-government.⁴

² See, *Personal and Literary Letters of Lord Lytton*, II, 1-219. Also see Lytton's address to the University of Calcutta in *Convocation Addresses*, I, 359-85 and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's article, "Foundations of the Government of India", in the *Nineteenth Century*, October 1883, 541-68.

³ However, the efforts to create and foster the "municipal feeling" were continued by the British administrators. In fact Lord Lawrence's Government made it plain in a resolution that: "Holding the position we do in India, every view of duty and policy should induce us to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people, by means of funds raised by themselves, and to confine ourselves to doing those things which must be done by the Government; and to influencing and directing, in a general way, all the movements of the social machine." See the *Gazette of India, Extraordinary*, dated September 14, 1864.

⁴ In the course of that resolution dated December 14, 1870 the Government emphasised: "Local interest, supervision and care are necessary to success in the management of funds devoted to education, sanitation, medical charity and local public works. The operation of this resolution in its full meaning and integrity will afford opportunities for the development of self-government, for strengthening municipal institutions, and for

In practice, however, there was little of local self-government. The measures taken gave the slightest of power and responsibility to the members, every one of whom, for example, was chosen by the officials. Lord Hobart aptly described the whole business as "an oligarchy dependent upon a superior power which may directly or indirectly control its action to almost any conceivable extent", and strongly urged, in order to create an interest in public affairs, "the choice of Native Members of Municipalities by popular election".⁵ His Lordship's proved to be a voice in the wilderness; many high-ranking officials violently disagreed with his view and warned the Government not "to expose Municipal institutions while yet in their infancy to the uncertainties and dangers of popular control until the people learn to appreciate them as they deserve."⁶

This was the background to Ripon's historic Resolution of May 18, 1882—a landmark in the annals of Indian constitutional development. This resolution has many aspects. It deals not only with popular representation but also with finance, taxation, education, sanitation, public health, raising of loans, etc. I shall confine my study to one aspect only, namely, the principle of election. Its significance the Resolution itself emphasised in these words: "It is not, primarily, with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education."⁷ Acts were promulgated for the different provinces making election compulsory in local boards, both urban and rural; while the Governor-General

the association of natives and Europeans, to a greater extent than heretofore, in the administration of affairs." See the *Gazette of India*, December 31, 1870.

⁵ Lord Hobart, then the Governor of Madras, in his Minute on the Report of the Select Committee of 1871, as quoted in the *Report of the Committee on Local Self-Government in Madras* (1882), 9-10.

⁶ See the *Report of the Committee on Local Self-Government in Madras* (1882), 10.

⁷ Commenting on this aspect of the resolution the *Hindoo Patriot* remarked: "This is the first time that the British Indian Government acknowledges that it is its duty to advance the 'political education' of the people by adopting direct administrative measures." (*The Hindoo Patriot*, June 5, 1882).

expressly decreed that "in no case ought the official members to be more than one-third of the whole."⁸ The Chairman was also to be elected and the "native" members were to be given the courtesy titles of "Rai (or Rao) Bahadur" or "Khan Bahadur" during their term of office.

The system of election was left to the discretion of the Local Governments because, as the Resolution pointed out, "Experience is wanting to determine the most suitable general system for each province and it is desirable that a variety of plans should be tried in order to [enable] a future comparison of results." Various methods were suggested: the simple vote, the cumulative vote, election by wards, election by the whole town or tract, suffrage on more or less extended qualifications, election by castes or occupations; even "new methods, unthought of in Europe" could be tried until "after a time it will probably be possible to say what forms suit best the local peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of the different populations."⁹

But notwithstanding these powers granted to Local Governments it was emphasised that any official control "should be exercised from without rather than from within". The Government concerned was to revise and check the acts of the local bodies; it could not dictate them. As the Resolution put it: "The non-official members must be led to feel that real power is placed in their hands and that they have real responsibilities to discharge."

Ripon's plan was naturally hailed by the educated classes as the first step towards representative government and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* praised it as "the only real attempt made since the accession of British power in India . . . to remove the stigma of subjection from the people."¹⁰ The reaction of

⁸ The proposed relaxation of official authority caused much annoyance and concern to several Provincial Governments and Anglo-Indian officials. See the Blue Book, "Copy of or Extracts from Correspondence between the Secretary of State for India in Council, the Government of India, and the various Local Governments, on the proposed Measures for the Extension of Local Government in India", Parts I and II.

⁹ *The Pioneer*, May 23, 1882.

¹⁰ Quoted by the *Statesman* (Weekly), June 3, 1882. *The Indian Spectator* was still more laudatory. "By one master-stroke", it wrote, "it is contemplated to effect a silent, gradual but momentous revolution in the

the Anglo-Indian community was, however, somewhat bitter and they resented in particular the pampering of, what Ripon called, "an intelligent class of public spirited men".¹¹ Even the sympathetic *Friend of India*, while greeting the Resolution as "a triumphant success" cautioned His Lordship that "men must still learn to walk before they can run".¹²

There were some among the Hindus—influential and well-to-do—who were also not pleased. They openly charged the Governor-General with giving "a new engine for oppression into the hands of local zamindars, mahajans, mukhtars, the *nouveaux riches*", and of making "petty tyrants vastly more powerful" than they had ever been before so that they could "bully their poor neighbours and aggrandize themselves at the expense of the needy."¹³

One of the important journals narrated the following story to prove that representative institutions were totally unsuited to the conditions in India:¹⁴

One day early in the morning a certain Brahmin, going from Calcutta to Ulubaria,¹⁵ halted at a riverside to perform his ablutions. As soon as he finished his morning devotions, the Brahmin engaged himself in making an image of the god Shiva out of the clay on the riverside. A lovely young girl, while passing on her way to the bathing ghat, saw the Brahmin so engaged. She finished her bath and, after some time, was returning home when she found the Brahmin still at work on the image. "Brahmin," said the girl, "the sun is up. You have spent the whole morning in making a Shiva. When will you worship him? And when will you finish your *Piyaz*?" "Child," replied the Brahmin, "it is not my fault. I have been struggling all

future political history of the country." See the editorial on the resolution in the *Indian Spectator*, May 28, 1882.

¹¹ The phrase was used in the resolution of May 18, 1882.

¹² *The Statesman*, May 26, 1882. Also see its subsequent editorial in the *Statesman*, June 1, 1882.

¹³ *The Indian Review*, October 1886, p. 16. Also see an editorial on the subject in the *Statesman*.

¹⁴ The journal referred to was the *Bengal Magazine*.

¹⁵ Ulubaria is a small town near Calcutta.

this time to make a Shiva, but such is the soil of Ulubaria that it invariably turns out to be an ape."¹⁶

Not in all cases, however, was the opposition so wholesale; there were some critics who did not mind the introduction of representative institutions in India but objected to the application of the British system of election. Prominent among them was one A. P. Webb, a regular contributor to the Anglo-Indian newspapers. He published from Meerut, immediately on the introduction of Ripon's scheme, a pamphlet on "Local Self-Government", putting forth some suggestions to meet the peculiar conditions in India. His main purpose was to drive home to the authorities that in any scheme of self-government for India "Caste and creed distinction must be recognised."¹⁷ As he put it: "The key of the position is . . . here."

Webb's reasons were familiar and commonplace but at times his analysis was thought-provoking. For instance, at one point, after explaining how the Indian Muslim still comforted himself as a conqueror of old, particularly in the villages, he wrote: "In many parts of India, chiefly where Muhammadan domination was most effectual, the subordinate executive (police and tahsil) is largely or often Muhammadan. There the Muslim acts with much impunity and considerable local weight." But the present-day Hindu knew no Muslim domination and, in consequence, emancipated by local self-government he would use, warned Webb, "his newly-acquired authority . . . to the detriment and annoyance of an old and persistent foe."¹⁸

¹⁶ See the *Bengal Magazine*, December 1872.

¹⁷ Webb, however, was not alone in the advocacy of such measures; some Anglo-Indian officials also entertained similar views. For instance, soon after the publication of Ripon's resolution, W. Lee-Warner, First Assistant Collector of Satara, wrote: "I am entirely in favour of the elective system; but . . . if the scheme is to be made 'consonant to the feelings and habits of the people' it will end in the substitution of the irresponsible despotism of the predominant caste in the place of responsible control of unprejudiced officials. Every large caste should be represented and the principle which is most opposed to the habits of the people—*divide et imperia*—should be adopted." Quoted by the *Pioneer*, August 16, 1883.

¹⁸ A similar warning was also given by H. N. B. Erskine, Commissioner of Sind, in his letter to the Bombay Government dated September 2, 1882:

"In every part of the vast Indian Empire the feeling between different

Wherever possible the Muslim would retaliate, with the result that there would always be "this inevitable danger" to the preservation of law and order. Webb, therefore, suggested that both "nomination" and "general election" should be abandoned altogether and instead "each Hindu caste and the Musalman section" should be assigned "the number of representatives returnable by each, thus leaving the elective system free scope within the limits of Caste and Section respectively." But while among the Hindus there was to be "division with caste", the Muslims were to elect their representatives "collectively".

Similar thoughts, it appears, were also entertained by the *Pioneer*. In its very first editorial on the Resolution of May 18, 1882, the newspaper pointed out how most of the European systems of election were "grossly unsuited to the conditions of Indian life".¹⁹ Other methods had to be considered; some novel suggestions had been put forth. Analysing them the journal observed that "election by caste or occupations" appeared "a really promising device, belonging to the class of those unthought of in Europe", and warned that "nothing could be more fatal to the success of the present scheme than any experiments having to do with the application of the merely European

religions and sections of the community is more or less hostile. We have only to look at recent outbreaks in different parts of India to see that this is an undoubted fact. There have been serious riots accompanied with loss of life in many places. I need not do more than refer to such serious disturbances as occurred not long ago at Mooltan, Bangalore and Salem to prove this and minor petty riots are frequent. I can remember many such riots and only recently, both at Karachi and at Hyderabad in Sind, there has been an exhibition of the ill-feeling between Muhammadans and Hindus. Is it well then to join these voters and mix them up in one election? To make the election one perhaps of Muhammadan vs. Hindu? I do not think it is, and I think the experiment too dangerous a one to be tried if it can be avoided without injustice; and as injustice can be avoided by making the voting by sections of the community and as such an arrangement would be, I believe, more satisfactory to the people themselves and more in conformity both with their traditions and tastes, I would strongly recommend it for adoption instead of the system of voting by wards."

Quoted by the *Pioneer*, August 15, 1883. See its criticism in the *Indian Spectator*, September 30, 1883.

¹⁹ *The Pioneer*, May 23, 1882.

ideas of election by wards, suffrage determined by qualifications of the kind recognised at home, and so forth. Trial of these methods should be distinctly ruled out from the beginning."²⁰

But these proposals and warnings did not have much effect on the Government, which went ahead with its plan in all provinces.²¹ Nor did the Muslim leaders take much notice of them. Perhaps this was due to the fact that in practice emphasis was not being laid so much on the elective system as on the powers of the local boards and municipalities and their relations with the Executive officers. It was also too early to talk of "electioneering" because, when enough men could not be found to fill the available seats, where was the point of "contest"?²²

Nevertheless, as the years rolled on, many Muslim leaders began to feel unhappy about Ripon's reforms, which they felt were making them subservient to the Hindus because of the latter's numerical majority. The full realisation of this had not yet dawned on the Muslims; but a vague fear was already disturbing them. That was why Sir Syed so tenaciously stuck to the principle of "nomination" and considered it, from the Muslim point of view, the most important part of the Government of India's Resolution.

In fact on this aspect of the problem Sir Syed spoke at great length in the Council of the Governor-General of India

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The following Provincial Acts were the immediate result of Ripon's resolution:

Madras: Madras Act IV of 1884
Bombay: Bombay Act II of 1884
Bengal: Act III of 1884 (B.C.)
N.W.P. & Oudh: Act XV of 1883
Punjab: Act XIII of 1884
Burma: Act XVII of 1884

²² In fact even several years later the situation had not improved much in this respect. As the statement exhibiting the "Moral and Material Progress of India" pointed out, "there was a widespread and natural tendency to return the same persons who had been sitting under the former law in many cases without contest, owing to the timidity of the community in exercising their new privileges and the candidates' ignorance of the art of canvassing." See the *Third Decennial Report* (1891-92), 95.

and said that the provisions in the proposed bill²³ which reserved to the Government the power to appoint members of local boards and the district councils not exceeding one-third of the whole number had his unqualified support. "I regard this provision in the bill", he declared "with unqualified satisfaction, and, as this is the first occasion on which the subject of local self-government has come before the legislature I cannot avoid expressing a hope that the provision to which I have alluded is an indication of the policy which Government intends to pursue in regard to legislation for other provinces also. It is indeed a matter which goes to the very root of the entire scheme of local self-government."

His reasons for such a stand were obvious. In a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourished, where there was no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions were still violent, where education in its modern sense had not made an equal or proportionate progress among all sections of the population, "the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations." Sir Syed explained how this would happen: "The large community would totally override the interests of the smaller community and the ignorant public would hold Government responsible for introducing measures which might make the differences of race and creed more violent than ever."²⁴ It was, therefore, necessary, according to Sir Syed, that the Government should reserve to itself the power of appointing a good number of members to local boards and district councils; that was the only way to secure and maintain "that due and just balance in the representation of the various sections of the Indian population which the system of election, pure and simple, would fail to achieve."²⁵

²³ The bill in question was the Central Provinces Local Self-Government Bill.

²⁴ For full text of Sir Syed's speech see *Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India* (1883), 16-20.

²⁵ Ibid. Later, while recommending, on behalf of the Government, the adoption of a similar provision for the North Western Provinces and Oudh, the Hon. J. W. Quinton said: "This principle, my Lord, has been already accepted by the Council in the case of the Central Provinces, and

In practice it was found that Ripon's reforms were not as bold as at first acclaimed. The various Provincial Governments considerably diluted it while putting it in operation. In consequence, there was little danger of one community dominating the other or the unofficial majorities riding rough-shod over the head of the Executive. Public interest in the elections was also lukewarm. Even during the initial years when, at the Governor-General's special instructions, officials worked up popular enthusiasm, only a small proportion of the voters exercised the franchise.²⁶ Most members used to be returned unopposed while, for seats which were contested, the credit was due more to the zeal of the officer in charge of the district or taluka than the "eagerness" of the electorate.²⁷ Truly does the *Cambridge History of India* record " . . . but at the end of the nineteenth century it was generally held to be too soon to say that Lord Ripon's policy in introducing self-government has been a success".²⁸

the reasons for it were put forth with great eloquence and force . . . by the Hon'ble Syed Ahmed Khan, a native gentleman whose ripe experience, broad views, sympathy with his countryman and disinterested and successful efforts for their enlightenment must always attach the highest weight to his opinions." (Ibid., 418-19)

²⁶ For instance, in our Municipality (i.e. of Purneah in Bengal) the statistics for the elections in 1884 and 1887 were as follows:

In 1884 out of 137 voters 33 voted in Ward I					
„	196	„	21	„	II
„	64	„	16	„	III
„	152	„	22	„	IV
In 1887 out of 245 voters 32 voted in Ward I					
„	260	„	7	„	II
„	99	„	7	„	III
„	178	„	17	„	IV

Quoted in an article, "Practical Experience of Local Self-Government in Bengal" by H. C. Cooke, District Magistrate of Purneah in the *Calcutta Review*, October 1888, 235.

²⁷ See J. P. Hewett's "Review of the Administration of Local Boards" published as a resolution by the Home Department, Government of India, in the supplement to the *Gazette of India*, August 21, 1897.

²⁸ See the *Cambridge History of India*, VI, 535. Though H. J. S. Cotton in his "Review of Municipal Administration", published as a resolution on behalf of the Government of India, talks of "the marked advance in self-Government during the last ten years", he does not give any account

Since the "elections" were generally ineffective and colourless, there was no occasion for any clash or conflict between the various interests or communities. Only at the time of electing a Chairman, who, under these reforms had to be a non-official, some communal bitterness used to be exhibited, but that too not in all cases. An interesting light on this matter is thrown by Lucien Wolf in his *Life of Ripon*, where he quotes with approval the following account by Harold Cox:

In 1886 or 1887, travelling through the Punjab, I discussed the matter with a venerable Sikh gentleman in the railway carriage. Speaking very slowly he said, 'I do not know what to think of the matter myself, but my friends who do understand politics do tell me that Lord Ripon's self-government is only a device of the British Government to make Hindus and Muhammadans hate each other more than they did before.' He then went on to explain that as long as the English official was ex-officio chairman he held the balance evenly between Hindus and Muhammadans but now they quarrelled like cats and dogs over the election of the chairman, whose impartiality was always suspect.²⁹

Not much importance can be attached to the Sikh gentleman's view except as showing a particular tendency in Indian politics which, at the close of our period, assumed considerable dimensions. According to the *Decennial Report on the Moral and Material Progress of India*, in the ten years ending 1891-92, in practically all cases, the District Boards elected the Collector as Chairman and the same happened to some extent in the Municipalities.³⁰

On the whole there was, therefore, little communal antagonism in municipal affairs, except in some places in Bengal. This might also have been due to the fact that the Muslims rarely took to local self-government seriously, perhaps also because of their general backwardness in education, lack of

whatsoever of the progress of "political and popular education", which was the basis of Lord Ripon's resolution. See the *Gazette of India*, October 31, 1896. ²⁹ Lucien Wolf: *Life of Lord Ripon*, II, 108 (fn).

³⁰ See *The Moral and Material Progress of India (Third Decennial Report)*, Chapter V, 92-128.

interest in politics and widespread poverty. In important cities like Bombay and Calcutta they did not fare very badly but generally, like the Europeans, they preferred to be "nominated" than go through the bother of election. As the *Decennial Report* ending 1891-92 puts it:

In India social influence is too often dis severed from intellectual culture and wealth and the two last from each other to admit at present of the distance being bridged by electoral privileges, so the dignity of nomination by the State exceeds in the eyes of the upper classes the honour of being wafted to a seat on the municipal board by the 'most sweet breath' of the multitude. . . ."³¹

This was certainly true of the Muslims and much more true of them than of the Hindus.

Regarded purely as a measure to raise public consciousness, Ripon's scheme was not much of a success; it satisfied the aspirations of some prominent Indians who managed to have a say in civic matters, but that was all. On administrative affairs, however, its impact was considerable. For the first time it was being realised that, far from running the administration, the "native" members, despite all their shortcomings and limitations, gave it greater strength by publicly associating with its acts.³² In consequence, the cry for "native" representation on

³¹ Ibid., 97. "The assiduity of the Musalman" can be gauged from the following table, giving returns of the election to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation:

<i>Race or Religion</i>	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Voted</i>	<i>Elected</i>	<i>Nominated</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hindus	7,964	2,308	35	3	38
Europeans & Eurasians	2,340	445	9	14	23
Muslims	1,286	608	6	5	11
Parsis	29	1	—	1	1
Chinese	9	3	—	—	—
Jews	36	4	—	2	2
	11,664	3,369	50	25	75

Ibid., 102.

³² For a brilliant advocacy of this point of view see Sir Julian Goldsmid's article, "Questions of the Day in India", in the *Nineteenth Century*, May 1883, 740-58 and Florence Nightingale's article, "Our Indian Stewardship", in the same journal for August 1883, 329-38.

the Councils of the Governors and Governor-General became much more vociferous. Moreover, in this campaign, the "native" leaders were considerably helped by the hue and cry of Europeans over the Ilbert Bill and similar pro-Indian measures.³³

All these developments, one after the other, gave a great fillip to the Indian political movement, which began to gather greater and greater momentum with every session of the Congress. In fact, in its inaugural session the Congress had demanded that "the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing Local Legislative Councils by the admission of a considerable proportion of the elected members (and the creation of similar councils for the N.W.P. and Oudh, and also for the Punjab)"; it also urged that "all Budgets should be referred to these Councils for consideration, their members being moreover empowered to interpellation; and that a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that may be recorded by majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power, which would be vested in it, of overruling the decision of such majorities."³⁴

Speaking on the resolution, both K. T. Telang (of Bombay) and S. Subramaniaiyer (of Madras) revealed from their own personal experiences on the Councils how "little influence they possessed in the Councils either for good or for evil;"³⁵ while Dadabhai Naoroji pointed out that it was from the English that they had learnt "how necessary representation is for good

³³ The Ilbert Bill would have allowed the "native" judges in mofussil courts to exercise jurisdiction in cases involving Europeans. This infuriated the Anglo-Indians to such an extent that there was even "wild talk of seizing the person of the unpopular Viceroy and deporting him to Australia". See S. K. Ratcliff's *Sir William Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement*, 55-56. Also see an editorial, "The Ilbert Bill and Our Future Course of Action" in the *Indian Mirror*, January 19, 1884. Sir Syed also deplored the European agitation. Speaking in the Viceroy's Legislative Council, he said: "With every wish that the views put forward by the European and Eurasian community should be duly considered, I confess, my Lord, I cannot help feeling deep and sincere regret at the attitude which the agitation against this bill has adopted." *Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India* (1883), 182.

³⁴ *Annual Congress Report* (1885), 23.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

government".³⁶ Otherwise, what was the good in being under the British rule, he asked. "It will be simply another Asiatic despotism."³⁷

In 1886 the Congress not only repeated its previous demand for "native" representation on the Councils but urged that such representation should be modulated on certain principles such as parity of representation between elected and nominated members, a specific and limited franchise (generally restricted to members of Municipalities, District Boards, Universities, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) and the submission of all financial measures to the Councils. "All persons, resident in India," declared the Congress resolution, "to be eligible for seats in Council, whether as electees or nominees, without distinction of race, creed, caste or colour".³⁸

To critics who considered such demands as chimeric, Surendranath Banerjea replied: "Our Panchayat system is as old as the hills and is graven on the hearts and instincts of the people. Self-Government is, therefore, nothing new to the habits of the ways of thought of the people of India."³⁹

For many years, at every subsequent session, the Congress repeated these demands, more or less in the same terms; but there was no official response to them, though secretly ways and means were being thought of to meet them. For instance, before his departure from India, Lord Dufferin had appointed, in camera, a Committee to go into the whole question of "native" representation, which, it was later openly alleged in the House of Lords, had recommended the creation of a council consisting of two divisions where "the gentry and nobility of the country" could be represented. The First Division

³⁶ Ibid., 26.

³⁷ Ibid. Elaborating this point further, Naoroji said: "We have learnt the lesson from them, and knowing from them how great a blessing it is to those nations who enjoy it, and how utterly un-English it is for the English nation to withhold it from us, we can, with confidence and trust, ask them to give us this."

³⁸ Ibid. (1886). For full text of the resolution see 41-43 and for speeches thereon see 98-110.

³⁹ *Annual Congress Report* (1886), 96. Also see Dr. G. W. Leitner's "Indigenous Elements of Self-Government in India" in the *Journal of the East India Association* (1884), 211-56; and his "Memorandum on the Subject of Self-Government in the Punjab". (Ibid., 261-326)

was to be directly elected, on a high property qualification, and the Second Division indirectly by Local Bodies and Municipalities. The Viceroy pressed for approval but the Secretary of State for India, Lord Cross, did not agree because the changes proposed were too "radical and fundamental".⁴⁰

The Congress agitation for constitutional reforms was, however, not confined within India's borders; a similar campaign by its London Agency was carried on among M.P.'s and Peers and in the columns of a section of the British press. In particular, Dadabhai Naoroji had gathered round him an influential circle of British friends through whom public attention was slowly being focussed, among other subjects, on the expansion and popularisation of Indian Councils. More than anything else it was this development in London which began to cause uneasiness to Sir Syed. He was not afraid so much of the Hindu agitation, whatever be its dimensions; but the support of some M.P.'s to the Hindu agitators! That Sir Syed deemed too dangerous to be ignored.

This was the background to the fifth session of the Congress which met in Bombay during Christmas 1889, under the presidency of Sir William Wedderburn, and was rendered unique by the presence of Charles Bradlaugh, who had travelled all the way from England to present for the consideration of the delegates a parliamentary bill designed to improve the character and composition of the Legislative Councils. On the basis of that bill, Eardley Norton, a prominent delegate from Madras, moved a long resolution embodying "certain important principles", which, if passed by the Congress, were to be submitted to Bradlaugh to be incorporated in his proposed bill to the Parliament.

The main points of that resolution were:⁴¹

(1) The Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils to consist respectively of Members not less than one-half of whom were to be elected, not more than one-fourth to sit *ex-officio* and the rest to be nominated by Government;

⁴⁰ *Hansard* (Indian Debates) Session, 1890, 67-68. Also see Sir Alfred Lyall's *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, II, 149-57.

⁴¹ For full text of the resolution see the *Annual Congress Report* (1889), 13-14.

(2) Revenue districts to constitute, ordinarily, territorial units for electoral purposes;

(3) All male British subjects above 21 years of age, possessing certain qualifications and not subject to certain disqualifications, to be voters.

(4) Voters in each district to elect representatives to one or more electoral bodies, according to local circumstances, at the rate of 12 per million of the total population of the district, such representatives to possess certain qualifications and not to be subject to certain disqualifications.

(5) All the representatives thus elected by all the districts included in the jurisdiction of each electoral body, to elect members to the Imperial Legislature at the rate of one per every five millions of the total population of the electoral jurisdiction and to their own Provincial Legislature at the rate of one per million of the said total population, in such wise that whenever the Parsis, Christians, Muhammadans or Hindus, as the case might be, elected to the Provincial Legislature, would not, so far as possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected thereto, than the total number of Parsis, Christians, Hindus or Muhammadans, as the case might be, in such electoral jurisdiction, bore to its total population. Members of both legislatures to possess certain qualifications and not to be subject to certain disqualifications.

(6) All election to be by ballot.

These proposals were the first "native" effort at constitution-making. A careful perusal of them would give an insight into the working of the "native" mind, as represented by the Congress leaders. In moving the adoption of these proposals at the Congress session, the mover dwelt at great length on the Clause (5) which provided, to use his words, "for the absolute protection of the minorities of this country".⁴²

Lala Lajpat Rai explained this aspect of the proposals thus:

We fear lest in some cases minorities, in whom this feeling of Indian brotherhood is not yet as fully developed as it will be a few years hence, might have doubts and think themselves unrepresented if men of their own special section did

⁴² Ibid., 15.

not sit upon the Councils and so, though in reality the thing is not needed (for we are all one) we have specially provided so that all such minorities shall necessarily be represented by men of their own particular sections.⁴³

By this time the Congress wanted to show how sincere it was "in guarding not only the real but even the possible prejudices of our Muhammadan brethren. . . ."⁴⁴

There were a few more speeches on the same lines and then the Congress President put the proposals, one by one, to vote. The whole business went on smoothly till clause (5) dealing with communal representation came up for voting, when, unexpectedly, a violent controversy erupted. Munshi Hidayet Rasul, a delegate from Oudh, jumped from his seat and demanded a hearing. "You can understand," he said, "under what difficulties we few persons (cries of 'More than 250') who are supposed to be representatives of five crores of Musalmans are placed. Firstly, petty officers of the different districts frown at us; secondly, Government looks askance at us; thirdly, our nation is adverse to the Congress movement (cries of 'No, no, it is not'); and fourthly the anxiety for the preservation of Muslim honour and Muslim rights is constantly preying upon our mind." He was, therefore, not prepared to remain "dumb and quiet" at the Congress session and "bear the adverse criticism".⁴⁵ In his opinion, the best course under the circumstances was to recommend that the number of Muslim Councillors should not be less than the Hindu Councillors. "I promise," he declared, "that if you accept this principle of equality you will have on your side 90 per cent of the Musalmans tomorrow and the remaining 10 per cent from the day after tomorrow."⁴⁶

Ali Muhammad Bhimjee, a Muslim delegate from Bombay, then moved, as an amendment, that "in Clause (5) omit the mention of Muhammadans and add the following: 'Provided that the number of Muhammadan members shall always be

⁴³ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Also see Rev. R. A. Hume's amendment, p. 30 and Eardley Norton's reply, p. 31.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 33.

equal to that of the Hindus, in both the Imperial and Provincial Councils'."⁴⁷

Animated discussion followed on the amendment in which only Muslim delegates participated, and a good many of them opposed it in bitter terms. Hamid Ali Khan from Lucknow said that the whole amendment was based "upon a wholly mistaken and baseless fear"⁴⁸ that the Hindus, because of their majority, would injure the Muslim interests. Syed Miruddin Ahmed Balkhi from Bihar warned the Muslim delegates that "if you ever give room to feelings of religious bigotry and differences you will never be entitled to receive those free British institutions which you are so eagerly praying for".⁴⁹ Nasiruddin Ahmed from Banaras admonished the mover that "it is not by vain boastings or loud swaggerings about our valour that our honour is to be preserved but by showing that we are at least as reasonable, earnest and considerate as others".⁵⁰

There were some speeches in favour of the amendment and then Shaikh Cumruddin Furrukhai from Bombay inquired of the President whether discussion on the amendment could not be suspended till the Muslim delegates, at a private meeting, thrashed out the matter among themselves. The President agreed; the Muslims met in private and after some time returned to the session. The amendment was then put to vote first to Muslim delegates alone and then to the whole house. The result of the Muslim voting was: 16 for the amendment; 23 against; the rest (consisting of about 200) abstaining. In the general vote, however, taken immediately after the result of the Muslim voting was announced, "most of the Muhammadans" to quote the official Congress recorder, "voted against it".⁵¹

Sir Syed was alarmed at these developments. He felt con-

⁴⁷ Ibid., 33. ⁴⁸ Ibid., 34-35. ⁴⁹ Ibid., 36-37. ⁵⁰ Ibid., 37-38.

⁵¹ Ibid., xxxviii. Commenting on the discussion the recorder wrote: "It was a remarkable proof of the spirit of tolerance that animated the Congress that from the moment this amendment was proposed, no Hindu, Parsi or Christian, despite the violence of the speaker's tone, took any part in the debate. It seemed to be felt that it was a matter chiefly affecting the Muhammadans, and that these had best be left to argue it out amongst themselves." (Ibid., xxxiii)

vinced that the Congress leaders were not only throwing dust into the eyes of some British politicians but deliberately trying to fool the Muslims. He was afraid that the support of the Muslim delegates at the Congress session to the constitutional proposals might be misunderstood in Parliament as the support of "the whole Muslim nation" to them. If that happened, it would be catastrophic for the Muslims. Something, therefore, had to be done to remove that misunderstanding. For days Sir Syed thought of various ways and means till, on Beck's suggestion, he decided that a monster petition be presented to the Parliament on this serious problem. Early in April 1890, a petition signed by nearly 40,000 Muslims from about 70 different cities and towns was presented, through Sir Richard Temple, to the House of Commons in which the petitioners prayed that "your Honourable House will not introduce the principle of election into the constitution of the Indian Councils, as requested by the Indian National Congress" because such a step would "destroy that even-handed justice which has been hitherto the basis of British rule and place them and other minorities in an almost intolerable subjection to classes actively hostile to their welfare."⁵²

The petitioners further prayed that the interest of 50 million Muslims should not be a matter of indifference to the House of Commons and that, therefore, no system of representation, not even proportional representation, should be introduced in India because it could not safeguard their interests. •

No sooner was the petition made public than there was a spate of criticism in the Hindu press and Sir Syed was subjected to the usual attacks. Even the Anglo-Indian *Statesman* described the petition as based on "imaginary and unfounded

⁵² For full text of the petition and the signatures obtained for it from different parts of India see Appendix C. A similar petition was forwarded to Parliament by the Muhammadan Literary Society. See the *Pioneer*, May 12, 1890. Later, on March 28, 1892, speaking in Parliament on the Indian Councils Act (1861) Amendment Bill, Sir Richard Temple reminded the House that the Muslims were "actually opposed to such a system. I have myself submitted representations on their behalf and have promised to watch their interest in reference to this Bill." *Hansard* (Indian Debates) Session 1892, 168.

... apprehensions",⁵³ which might have had some force had the Congress not anticipated them and provided against them in its scheme. Sir Syed, however, found a valiant supporter in *The Times* which squarely denounced the Congress scheme as a clever device engineered by "a little organised clique of baboos" to gain political power for itself. The agitators did not have any right to speak on behalf of the people of India, contended the British organ, because they had no contacts with the ryots, the working classes, the "native" aristocracy, the Muslims and the Parsis. Then "who are there yet remaining to whom the Congress movement may be thought due?" asked the newspaper. "It has been," it maintained, "a Hindu movement, set going by an advanced section of Hindus, trained in the Universities and Colleges which we have established in the course of the last thirty years and turned out from them in numbers largely in excess of the demand."⁵⁴ About their constitutional proposals: "if the agitators are satisfied, the thing granted must be bad; if they are not satisfied, it is useless for its intended object."

But notwithstanding these protests and perhaps because of the pressure brought by that liberal-minded Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, who had assumed the reins of his high office only a year previously, the British Government introduced in Parliament on February 21, 1890, an Indian Councils Bill. It made no provision for the introduction of the elective principle, "due to the fact", as Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister pointed out, "that we have to deal with a deeply-divided population."⁵⁵ Explaining the point, he said, "the principle of election or Government by representation is not an Eastern idea; it does not fit Eastern traditions or the Eastern mind".⁵⁶ Even Lord Kimberley, who advocated some sort of popular representation, believed that "the notion of a Parliamentary representation, of so vast a country—almost as large as Europe—

⁵³ *Statesman* (Weekly Edition), April 12, 1890. Also see an editorial entitled, "A Muhammadan Protest", in the *Pioneer*, May 22, 1890.

⁵⁴ *The Times*, London, June 23, 1890. Also see an article on the Congress in *The Times*, June 22, 1890.

⁵⁵ *Hansard* (Indian Debates) Session 1890, 85.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

containing so large a number of different races is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men."⁵⁷

In some sections of Parliament there were expressions of regret at the limited scope of the reforms proposed. "My Lords," declared Lord Stanley of Alderley, "if this Bill goes out to India as it is now, it will be a great disappointment to the Indian public. Some persons will not allow that there is an Indian people . . . but only a collection of races of various languages, religions, manners and custom", but, in that sense, asked Stanley, where was there a nation in Europe? "Where is a nation even in the United Kingdom, of which Voltaire said, 'It is a country of a hundred religions and but one sauce'." Indians also had one sauce, reminded Stanley, "which prevails from one end of the country to the other: that is—curry." He asked the Government not to ignore the great progress towards unity that India was making through the English language, the Indian Penal Code, the railways, etc. but to encourage it by "the amalgamation of the armies" and other ways.⁵⁸

That Salisbury's Government was not very serious even about these constitutional proposals became evident when, after postponing their consideration for months, it withdrew the Bill and did not re-introduce it, despite protests from many members of Parliament, until the beginning of 1892.⁵⁹ Again, discussion centered round the question of selecting the Councilors; but the Government, as before, was firmly opposed to the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 79. ⁵⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁹ One of the main reasons why the Government was so reluctant to carry through the Bill in Parliament was the growing Liberal support to the Congress. As Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, explained to Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy, in a private letter dated June 27, 1890, "To speak plainly—and asking your pardon if I wound any sympathies—I dread this question being discussed while Mr. Gladstone is still a political force. He has, to my eyes, so entirely lost all sense of responsibility while retaining much of his old authority and all his old mastery over vague philanthropic phraseology that it would be a capital danger to the Empire if the language he is sure to use is taken as a watchword by the innovators in India. There is no other statesman near him or in sight who could effect a tenth part of the evil which will be caused by a few of his phrases of gorgeous reckless optimism." Quoted by Lord Newton in his biography of Lord Lansdowne, 72.

system of election. After great persuasion from many prominent peers, who had first-hand experience of Indian affairs, it agreed to an amendment by Lord Northbrook which empowered the Governor-General-in-Council, with the approval of the Secretary-of-State-in-Council, to make regulations for the nomination of additional members and to "prescribe the manner in which such regulations should be carried into effect".⁶⁰

But there were some M.P.'s who were not satisfied with this compromise. To them, it was the same old wine in a new jar. They mostly belonged to the Liberal and Radical group and insisted that "no reform of the Indian Councils which does not embody the elective principle will prove satisfactory to the Indian people or compatible with the good government of India".⁶¹ They stood firm, in spite of Lord Curzon's assurance on behalf of Her Majesty's Government that "our Bill does not exclude some such principle, be it the method of election, or selection or delegation or whatever the particular phrase that you desire to employ".⁶² In explaining his contention, Curzon quoted Kimberley who had said that "under this clause [i.e. Northbrook's amendment] it will be possible for the Governor-General to make arrangements by which certain persons may be presented to him, having been chosen by election, if the Governor-General should find that such a system can properly be established." As the House was about to be divided on this clause, Gladstone intervened and appealed to the members to trust in the bona fides of the Government because "what the honourable gentleman, the Under-Secretary, did embody in his speech was the elective principle in the only sense in which he could be expected to embody it."⁶³ In consequence, there was no division, though in the later stages of the Bill, especially in the Committee, other attempts were made

⁶⁰ *Hansard* (Indian Debates) Session: 1892, 128-34.

⁶¹ See Schwann's amendment to the Bill in *Hansard*: (Indian Debates) Session: 1892, 144.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 190. *The Times*, London, was furious with the critics and warned that any kind of representative system in India "would be certain to wrong the weakest and to affront the strongest among the subjects of the Empire." (*The Times*, March 8, 1890)

⁶³ For full text of Gladstone's speech see *Hansard* (Indian Debates) Session: 1892, 144-50.

by some Liberal M.P.'s to modify some of its provisions but all to little avail.

But despite its many drawbacks the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was a triumph for the Congress agitators; it met many of their demands such as enlargement of Councils, discussion of financial statements and right of interpellation, and though it banged the door on popular representation, under the elusive clause incorporated in the Act on the suggestion of Northbrook, many prominent Congress leaders were, in fact, nominated to the Imperial and Provincial Councils. For Sir Syed and his colleagues the only point of satisfaction was the firm refusal of Her Majesty's Government to introduce any kind of parliamentary system in India; but it did not take long for them to realise that notwithstanding the language of the Act the Governor-General as well as the various Governors were succumbing to pressure from the Congress and in practice nominating to their Councils the same leaders whom many high Government officials, along with Sir Syed and his friends, had denounced as "sedition-mongers".⁶⁴

Before the passing of the Act Sir Syed was an active member of the Governor-General's Council; the introduction of the new measure, however, resulted in his retirement from it.⁶⁵ Perhaps he did not think it would be wise to sit in the House with those whom he had so vehemently attacked in the past.

In consequence, Sir Syed felt rather uneasy at the turn of events, which made him realise, more than ever before, that unless the interests of the Muslims were protected by the Govern-

⁶⁴ See an editorial, "The Legislative Councils", in the *Pioneer*, March 12, 1892. "The supreme merit of official language is sometimes held to reside in the use of circuitous phrases instead of those which would plainly say what is meant, and Lord Cross does not rise above conventional theory on the subject; so he shirks putting in straightforward terms what of course the phrase just quoted implies, that the Bill is designed to be an experiment in native representative government." (Ibid.) Also see for a review of Sir Syed's work in the Viceroy's Legislative Council, Hali's *Hayate Javeed* (Urdu text), pp. 186-193, and for his speeches in the Council on various Bills see the *Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General of India*, (1879) 154-60, 230-34; (1880) 12-13, 39-43; (1882) 61-64, 104-07; (1883) 16-20, 182-87.

⁶⁵ See Hali, *Hayate Javeed* (Urdu text), 192 (Part I).

ment they were bound to be swept away by the rising tide of the Congress movement. For some years now, Sir Syed had not spoken publicly on political questions; but the new constitutional developments were so far-reaching in their character that he felt compelled to speak to the millions of his co-religionists, "who, though unacquainted with me personally look forward to the declaration of my views and policy as to public affairs and are pleased to regard them with great esteem."⁶⁶

In his statement he stated, at the outset, that there was no truth in the interpretation given by some Congress leaders to his 'political silence' for some years as his acquiescence in Congress agitation. His views had undergone no change and he still held that representative government was no solution of the Indian constitutional problem. In fact the subsequent developments had more than convinced him that where there was "no tangible homogeneity among the voters in point of race, religion, social manners, economic conditions and political traditions" the representative system could never "be productive of any good".⁶⁷

He, therefore, fervently hoped that whether the Conservatives, Liberals or Radicals were in power in Britain they would not forget that "India is a continent, not a small country. . . . that it consists of vast populations, whose economic, moral, social, political, religious, physical and historical conditions are vastly different; who, since the downfall of the Muhammadan Empire, have never been able to agree among themselves." He cautioned the British public not to be misled by the Congress, which, "notwithstanding all this", deliberately shut its eyes "to the great and living facts of the past and the present", and went about on the assumption that "the Muhammadan and the Maharatta, the Brahmin and the Chhatri, the Bania and the Sudra, the Sikh and the Bengali, the Madrasi and the Peshawari may all be dealt with as one nation."

Sir Syed also made no secret of his contempt for the

⁶⁶ *The Pioneer*, September 29, 1892.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Also see an editorial entitled, "A Muhammadan Confession of Political Faith", *Ibid.*

institution of democracy. "I regard it", he said, "as nothing short of superstition . . ." Recalling his talk with the famous English historian, Carlyle, he said that he agreed with him that the majority of mankind, which under democracy would become dominant, "is far from being wise".⁶⁸

Analysing the historical development of "Government" in different countries and at different times—from the "ancient Republics of Greece and Rome" and the "quasi-Republican system" of the "Islamic Commonwealth" to the political institutions of the Latin races, down, in modern times, to Russia, and other European countries, which had succeeded in creating nothing "beyond such anarchy as Democracy, Socialism and Nihilism"—Sir Syed tried to prove that the only people who "have really prospered under a representative system of government belong to the Anglo-Saxon race". Consequently if the British tried to apply their panaceas to others' ills, instead of being cured, they were bound to get worse.

As a political philosophy, this was too out of date and could not be appreciated by the M.P.'s to whom it was mainly addressed; but as an angry outburst it succeeded in showing the depth of Sir Syed's frustration at the turn of events. This was seen quite clearly some months later when Beck, in a letter to the *Pioneer*, explained the position more precisely. "The chief cause of disloyalty is the policy of the Government which is constantly yielding to demands supported by seditious agitation," he wrote. "In a word, disloyalty pays." He accused the Government of India and the Provincial Governments of nominating "prominent agitators . . . to seats in the Legislative Councils" thus increasing "tenfold" the strength of the Congress. He was surprised that concessions, one after the other, were made to "classes that agitate" and were withheld from "classes that do not".⁶⁹

These protests did not seem to have much effect on the Government; in any event prominent Congress leaders continued to be nominated to these Councils. Sir Syed and other

⁶⁸ During his stay in England in 1867-68 Sir Syed made a special point of meeting Carlyle because of the latter's having chosen Muhammad as "a hero among prophets" for his famous lectures.

⁶⁹ *The Pioneer*, November 30, 1893.

Muslim leaders, therefore, gradually gave up their fight against the introduction of the representative element in legislatures and began to devise ways and means by which the Muslims would have their full share in the constitutional reforms. In fact the gravity of this aspect dawned on them when they saw that, despite Lansdowne's assurance that there would be fair Muslim representation on the various Councils,⁷⁰ the Muslims were either ignored or not given their proper share in the appointment of legislative councillors. The figures (given below) explain their contention:

(A) GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
(*Non-official Members*)

	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Europeans</i>	<i>Parsis</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Total</i>
1895	6	2	1	2	11
1896	4	2	1	2	9
1897	5	3	—	2	10
1898	6	2	—	1	9
1899	3	2	1	1	7
1900	4	2	1	2	9
1901	5	3	1	—	9
1902	5	3	—	1	9
1903	6	2	—	2	10
1904	6	3	—	2	11
1905	4	1	—	2	7
1906	3	1	—	3	7

Though at the end of this period, the Muslims began to fare much better, their position in the beginning caused considerable alarm to the Muslim leaders, who were anxious to associate

⁷⁰ On the eve of his departure, Lord Lansdowne, while replying to the Address of the Muhammadan community on January 22, 1894 at Calcutta, said: "You have expressed a hope that your people may not be denied a fair share of representation upon the enlarged Councils. As to that I may tell you that it has from the first been our intention to secure them a reasonable number of seats. The vacancy which was recently created by the retirement of Mr. Chentsal Rao Pantalu will, I hope, be filled by the appointment of a Muhammadan gentleman, and the Council would then include eight Indian members, of whom three would be Hindus, two Sikhs, two Muhammadans and one Parsi." See *Speeches by the Marquis of Lansdowne*, 377.

with the Government, despite their dislike of the new constitutional measure.

The same position prevailed in the various Provincial Councils.⁷¹ For instance, in the Legislative Council of Bengal, which had the largest Muslim population in India and a Muslim majority in the presidency, the Hindus had almost double the Muslim representation:

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF BENGAL
(*Non-official Members*)

	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Europeans</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Total</i>
1895	6	10	3	19
1896	8	8	2	18
1897	8	10	2	20
1898	8	10	2	20
1899	7	8	2	17
1900	7	9	2	18
1901	8	10	2	20
1902	7	10	2	19
1903	8	8	3	19
1904	8	10	2	20
1905	8	10	1	19
1906	8	10	1	19

Less in number than the Hindus these Muslims in the Legislative Councils were also not representatives of Sir Syed and his group, which undoubtedly had a large Muslim following among the upper and educated classes, particularly in North India. For example, excepting Syed Mahmud and Haji Ismail, none of the other lieutenants of Sir Syed—and some of them were quite distinguished men—found a place in the Provincial Councils; and not one from among Sir Syed's colleagues was ever nominated to the Imperial Council.⁷²

⁷¹ See the Parliamentary Paper entitled, "Return showing the date of establishment, under Act LXVII of 1861 (1) of the Viceroy's Legislative Councils of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and giving Particulars as to Appointment, Position, Length of Service and Nationality of the Members of the Council; also Number of sittings of, and Acts passed at the Viceroy's Court each year (1890)".

⁷² Excepting Morison who was a member of Lord Curzon's Legislative Council in 1903-4.

One of the Muslim leaders who sat for some years on the Governor-General's Council, was Rahimtulla Sayani, an ex-President of the Congress, about whom the *Moslem Chronicle* wrote: "The Muslim community, in clear and unmistakable terms and in emphatic protests, had made known their view that he did not, would not and could not represent them. . . ."⁷³

Frustrated by these developments, Sir Syed and his group applied their minds anew to a solution of their problems and prepared, in December 1896, a draft scheme dealing with Muslim representation on the Legislative Councils and Municipalities; it was mainly the work of Theodore Beck and, Sir Syed's son, Syed Mahmud, and was presented to the Government by the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association.

After expressing their alarm at the introduction of the "elective principle", the authors of this draft scheme pointed out that it would be "useless and foolish" now to ask for its abolition. Such a step would not only be resisted by the Hindus; it would be condemned in England. What the Muslims should press, advised the authors, was such a modification of the system as would ensure them "a reasonable and just representation".

The salient points of the Mahmud-Beck Scheme were:

(1) *Representation on Legislative Councils*: An equal number of seats to the Hindus and Muslims because if the former had "numerical superiority", the latter's "historical position" was no less important.

(2) *Representation on Municipalities*: The authors admitted that it was impossible to lay down a general rule, applicable to every town in India, but suggested that in towns where the Muslims approximated one-fourth or more of the population, they must be given an equal number of seats with the Hindus, because "the importance of a section of population depends not only on its numbers but on other considerations". Where the Muslims were less than 25 per cent of the population, their representation should be as far as possible proportionate to their numbers.

(3) *Representation on the District Boards*: As far as pos-

⁷³ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 16, 1897.

sible on the same lines and principles as those suggested with regard to Municipalities.

Their most important contribution, however, concerned the "electors". They explained that, because the great majority of electors were Hindus, they were bound to return, if at all, Muslims, who would not represent the views of the Muslim community but rather those of the majority of their electors—the Hindus, who had helped them to get elected. The authors pointed out how this had been done on numerous occasions in the deliberations of the Congress, where "the favourite device was adopted of choosing a Muhammadan as a chairman . . . even if he were the only one in the room". This was worse than representation; it was "misrepresentation". If such a policy were adopted in regard to the election to Legislative Councils, the Hindus would invariably help to send there "a Congressional Muhammadan" and the "Muhammadans anxious for the honour of a seat in the Councils" would be "tempted to abandon the policy most beneficial to their community" and instead would toe the Hindu line.

In consequence, the authors suggested that "elementary principles of representative institutions demand . . . that the electors of the Muhammadan members should consist of Muhammadans and the electors of the Hindu Members of Hindus". The same principle was to be applied to the election of members for the Municipalities and District Boards.

"The above proposals", explained the authors, "all assume one cardinal fact, namely that the Muhammadans are for political purposes a community with separate traditions, interests, political convictions and religion. . . . It is not a question here whether the Muhammadans are right or wrong. . . . The point is that they have different views and any rational system of representation should provide for their expression."⁷⁴

As constitutional reforms were being worked out, "separatist" tendencies among the Muslims were increasingly strengthened, with the result that Hindu-Muslim relations, which had already deteriorated because of communal disturbances, became still worse. At the close of the nineteenth century there occurred

⁷⁴ For full text of the Scheme see the *Pioneer*, December 22, 1896.

several instances of political fights between the two communities, particularly in Local Boards and Municipalities, for which, despite non-communal electorates, elections were conducted on religious lines.

In municipal employment, nepotism was freely practised and in the Council chambers Hindu and Muslim members vied with each other to protect their separate interests. This was a great blow to the democratic aspirations rightly roused by Ripon's reforms; it not only weakened the proper operation of representative institutions, but also intensified communal hatred, which in turn was exploited by interested parties in both the religious camps for their own political aggrandizement.

The Muslims, being a minority, were naturally the greater sufferers. In many places the Hindus rendered the entry of the Muslims into the local councils and municipalities impossible, Calcutta and Poona being glaring examples. In the elections to the Poona City Municipality held on March 2, 1895, most of the Muslim voters, on the advice of their local leaders, abstained from voting because they found it impossible to secure the return of even one Muslim candidate, all the six hundred and odd Muslim voters being so scattered over the city as to place them in a hopeless minority everywhere.⁷⁵

The Muslim boycott of elections in Poona had repercussions all over the country. *The Times of India*, in a long editorial, wrote: "Explain the matter as we may, it places the badge of exclusion upon a powerful minority, makes them resentful of the preponderance of the majority, and, at the best, indifferent to the local interests from all share in the conduct of which they are debarred." Referring to the contention of some Hindu leaders that the Government could "redress the balance" by nominating a sufficient number of Muslim members, the Bombay newspaper pointed out that "nomination" might "correct the inequalities of a representative system" but was no substitute for proper representation. In the case of the Poona City Municipality, it suggested two devices by which the Muslims could secure a fair representation:

⁷⁵ *The Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), March 9, 1895.

- (1) The amalgamation of the sixteen wards into one so that *scrutin de liste* would supplant *scrutin d'arrondissement*; or
- (2) the electorate should be grouped in three or four large wards, in each of which, the Muslims, though in a minority, would be able to return at least one representative.⁷⁶

The Statesman was almost bitter in its comments on the Poona elections, which provoked it to pen a general editorial on "The Rights of Minorities", in which the newspaper asked the Government never to forget, in their attempts to introduce representative institutions in India, that "Hindu votes . . . are not for Muhammadan candidates . . . under present circumstances", adding cynically, "if they would be under any circumstances". The Calcutta newspaper, however, disagreed with the view of some critics that this was one more proof of the unsuitability of the representative principle to Indian administration. "What it really proves", it wrote, "is that, if such institutions are to have a fair chance of success in India, special steps must be taken to protect the interests of important minorities," which unlike those in England, were non-fluctuating and permanent. To mitigate the evil that such a situation gave rise to, the *Statesman* referred approvingly to the measure taken by the Punjab Government in regard to Lahore, where, in each ward, a certain fixed number of seats had been allotted to the four principal religious communities, namely, the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, and remarked that ". . . perhaps this is the simplest and most convenient way of satisfying all parties and securing a fairly just result".⁷⁷ Apparently the

⁷⁶ Ibid., March 16, 1895.

⁷⁷ *The Statesman* (Weekly), March 27, 1895. About this the statement exhibiting the "Moral and Material Progress of India", wrote: "A curious feature in the municipal arrangements of the Punjab is that in the capital city of the province it has been found necessary to adopt a religious basis for the constituencies, and to allow a number to be elected by the Hindu, Musalman, Sikh and Christian communities respectively." (Third Decennial Report, p. 96). In Amritsar also "new rules were framed allotting representatives to the two communities in proportion to their numbers; these rules have worked well and have allayed party feeling." (Annual Statement for 1889-90, p. 32). These rules were welcomed by the *Moslem Chronicle*, April 4, 1895.

Lahore measure was the first experiment in, what later on came to be known in Indian politics as, "reservation of seats" for minorities.

The atmosphere in the Legislative Councils, in particular of Bengal, which continued to hold a prominent position in political India, was no better. There also the Hindu influence was predominant, and often it was used to bolster up Hindu interests. But the Muslim leaders were also quite vigilant and did not fail to make capital out of any partisan attitude shown by some Hindu leaders. To quote from a long and interesting editorial in the *Moslem Chronicle*:

However loud we may hear of the vaunted patriotism of our Hindu fellow-subjects, however enlightened and educated they may become as befitting the Councillors of Government, we have come to learn that this patriotism is another name for self-aggrandizement and this education and culture is another name for refined hatred of the beef-eating Muslims."⁷⁸

The reason for this angry outburst was the allegedly communal attitude of some prominent Hindu leaders in the Bengal Legislative Council. With pungent rhetoric the Muslim organ hurled its accusations:

When men like Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose could question in the Bengal Council the propriety of parading the Muhurram procession in the streets of Calcutta, when the Honourable Surendranath Banerjea could hail with delight the obnoxious cow-killing circular of the Bengal Government, when the Raja of Natore could question the education of Muhammadan boys in Government schools, when the whole Hindu community could rise as one man to honour Mr. Cotton for administering his undignified snub to the only legitimate question which the Honourable Maulvi Seraj-ul Islam could put him with regard to the conditions of the Muhammadans

⁷⁸ *The Moslem Chronicle*, May 9, 1895. Also see an editorial, "Government Resolution on Nomination of Representatives to the Council", in the *Moslem Chronicle*, May 16, 1895.

under the English Government, we confess that before long the condition of our co-religionists would be too precarious.⁷⁹

Nor were the Muslims, as I have explained earlier, satisfied with the selection of Muslim representatives, who, according to some of their journals, were either pro-Congress like Sayani and Nawab Syed Muhammad, or political nobodies like Maulvi Syed Muhammad (in Bengal) and Ghulam Muhammad (in Madras). In fact when the appointment of the last-named gentleman in the beginning of 1898 was announced the Muslim press, following the lead given by the *Muhammadan* of Madras,⁸⁰ created so much hullabaloo against his nomination that even Hindu newspapers like the *Standard* and the *Hindu* urged upon the Government the selection of better and more representative Muslim candidates.

But the more the Muslim leaders relied on patronage and special considerations, the more the Government impressed upon them the virtues of "self-reliance" and "self-help". These alone, Curzon often reminded them, could redress their grievances and aid in their regeneration. "Don't lean on artificial ropes and pulleys", admonished the Governor-General.⁸¹ "All very well to give such an advice", retorted a Muslim newspaper, but it did not improve the situation.⁸² In fact Curzon's "censure" provoked the newspaper to tell the story of a certain father who, finding his son fallen in a well, began to censure him. The son replied: "Good father, please go and fetch some ropes and pulleys to save me first. For censuring there will be enough time." Curzon, however, was too busy in his many

⁷⁹ *The Moslem Chronicle*, May 9, 1895.

A more serious cause of distrust among the Muslims against the Hindus was the election of very few Muslims to the municipalities and local boards. For instance in the triennial elections for the Calcutta Municipality held in 1897, of the newly elected commissioners only 6 were Muslims as against 36 Hindus. See the "Moral and Material Progress of India" (Annual Statement for 1897-98), p. 6.

⁸⁰ See an editorial in the *Moslem Chronicle*, February 13, 1898.

⁸¹ Lord Curzon in his reply to an address presented to him by the Muslim zamindars of Sind on October 27, 1900 at Karachi. See for full text of his speech, the *Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), November 3, 1900.

⁸² *The Moslem Chronicle*, November 3, 1900.

administrative reforms to act a "good father" to the Muslims. The watchword of his policy was "efficiency" and not communal adjustment, which often proved detrimental to efficiency.

In the preceding chapter we have seen how this attitude of the Government coupled with the aggressive Hinduism of Tilak and his colleagues, especially during the annual Ganapati and Shivaji celebrations, made the politically conscious Muslims apprehensive of their future. For the first time they realised that, unless they organised themselves politically, they were sure to be left in the lurch. Such organising could be done either by an alliance with the Congress or separately by the Muslims on their own. For some time there was hesitation but finally the die was cast in favour of a separate Muslim organisation. In this, constitutional developments, particularly during the years 1905-6, helped the "separatists" considerably. They were able to convince the Government that unless the Muslim aspirations were satisfied in the particular manner that they wanted there was bound to be an intensification of communal ill-will, leading to outbreaks of disturbances. Lord Minto was not only sympathetic to them but he also realised that the Muslims could provide a good brake against any hasty Hindu demands for constitutional advancement. In consequence, when the Muslim deputation asked for "separate electorates", both the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for India agreed, though not very willingly, to concede the substance of that demand in their famous Minto-Morley reforms.⁸³

⁸³ As John Buchan in his, *Lord Minto: A Memoir*, puts it: "The main difficulty concerned the Muhammadans as to whom a vigorous controversy raged all summer both in India and in Britain. The Government of India's plan, following upon Minto's pledge to the Muslim deputation on October 1, 1906, was to give the Muhammadans separate electorates, supplemented to the full extent of their legitimate claims by further representation through mixed electorates, or by nomination where they failed to obtain a fair share of the elective seats. Minto desired to prevent the followers of Islam from becoming a rigid *enclave*, divorced from the rest of Indian life. But unfortunately during the discussion of the Bill in Parliament the Secretary of State suggested as the best solution mixed electoral colleges based on proportional representation. This proposal, which seemed to entrust Muhammadan interests wholly to mixed electorates, and to abandon the principle of communal representation, was stoutly opposed by Indian Muslims, and by Mr. Ameer Ali and the Aga Khan in London. The

Muhammadan leaders put their claims too high, but eventually they were induced to agree to what was virtually the Viceroy's scheme, receiving a minimum of six members in the Viceroy's Legislative Council—five elected by purely Muhammadan electorates, one nominated, and possible additions from the mixed electorates. There were many deputations received and interviews granted in Whitehall and Simla, and Lord Morley seems, in spite of his tenderness for Islam, to have grown very weary of Islam's spokesman. It was delicate ground, for, as he wrote, 'We have to take care that in picking up the Musalman we don't drop our Hindu parcels'."

CHAPTER FOUR

Administrative Reforms

ALL THROUGH this period the Indian National Congress passed on an average about twenty resolutions a year. They covered a wide range of subjects, from expressions of loyalty to "our beloved Mother", Queen Victoria, to concern about plague expenditure and even the evils of prostitution. Many of them used to be repetitions of former demands and were presented as "Omnibus Resolutions". Of all of the resolutions the most important were those demanding the expansion and Indianisation of the Legislative Councils: a subject which has been fully discussed in the preceding chapter. Next was the question of the Indian Civil Service. In fact this used to produce more enthusiasm and heat at the Congress sessions than any other topic, perhaps because the educated classes were so intimately concerned with the reform of these Services.

Then there were resolutions asking for relaxation of rules under the Arms Act; a decrease in military expenditure; the separation of the Executive from the Judiciary and the granting of more powers to jurors; the enforcement of the Permanent Settlement and establishment of agricultural banks; the lowering of the salt tax; the repeal of excise duties on cotton and encouragement to swadeshi goods. In the later years of the period under review the general question of 'Poverty and Famine' also figured prominently.

Not all the subjects were pursued with the same zeal and energy. Some of them even did not produce a noticeable reaction. They were embodied in resolutions, passed, forwarded to the authorities, and then forgotten. There were some matters, however, which were pressed with much passion and sincerity, like the demands for reform of Public Services and the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive, and resolutions on problems concerning general poverty and famines in the country. These led to much bitter controversy not only between officials and non-officials but also between Hindu and Muslim leaders. In particular, no subject roused so much passion on all sides as the reform and reconstruction of the Public Services.

At its very first session in 1885 the Congress demanded, by a unanimous resolution, the simultaneous holding of examinations in England and India "for first appointments in various civil departments of the public service"—in accordance with the views of the India Office Committee of 1860.¹ Dadabhai Naoroji, who was the mover of this resolution, described it as "the most important key to India's moral and material advancement". He said that all other political reforms would be of no

¹ The India Office Committee consisted of Sir J. P. Willoughby, Sir Erskine Perry and Messrs. Mangles, Arbuthnot and Macnaughten. In their Report, dated January 20, 1860, they declared that they were "unanimously of opinion that it is not only just but expedient that the Natives of India shall be employed in the administration of India to as large an extent as possible, consistently with the maintenance of British supremacy" and recommended the removal of the "inequality" of the "natives" so that "we should no longer be exposed to the charge of keeping promise to the ear and breaking it to the heart".

avail if this was not conceded. "It is a question of life and death to India", he pointed out.²

In 1886 a Royal Commission was appointed to review the whole question of Public Services in India and "to devise a scheme which may reasonably be hoped to possess the necessary elements of finality and to do full justice to the claims of Natives of India to higher and more extensive employment in the public service". It was also publicly made known that the investigations of the Commission would be preparatory to a Parliamentary enquiry into Indian affairs.

True, the appointment of the Commission was not due directly to the Congress resolution; but the agitation for reform of Public Services had been going on for a number of years. In fact numerous Indian Associations had been publicly demanding, year after year, changes in Civil Service rules and regulations. To quote an instance: Surendranath Bannerjea's triumphant lecture tours through different provinces in 1878 had greatly stimulated public opinion on the retrograde policy of Lord Salisbury in reducing the age-limit for the Civil Service examination to 19. Again, an all-India Memorial on this question was presented to the House of Commons in 1879. In consequence, the Congress resolution was nothing but a culmination of popular reactions.³

² Elsewhere Naoroji had put the matter in still more forceful terms: "The thousands that are being sent out by the Universities every year find themselves in a most anomalous position. There is no place for them in their motherland. They may beg in the streets or break stones in the roads, for aught the rulers seem to care for their natural rights, position and duties in their own country. They may perish or do what they like or can, but scores of Europeans must go from this country to take up what belongs to them, and that in spite of every profession for years and years past and up to the present day, of English statesmen, that they must govern India for India's good, by solemn Acts and declarations of Parliament, and, above all, by the words of the august Sovereign herself." See Naoroji's correspondence with the Secretary of State for India in the *Journal of the East India Association*, 1882, 171-72. Also see a series of informative and well-documented articles on the subject, "To what extent are the Public Services open to the Children of the Soil?", in the *Indian Spectator*, April 12, May 10 and 24, June 7, 14 and 21, and July 26, 1885.

³ In fact, as early as 1878, the *Hindoo Patriot* had boasted: "We have had a most splendid manifestation of this united feeling on the Civil Service

The Royal Commission consisted of 15 members, of whom four were Hindus, two Muslims and the rest Europeans and Anglo-Indians, most of them being officials. It was presided over by Sir C. A. Turner, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Madras. None of the Congress leaders was invited to sit on the Commission; while the two Muslim members were Sir Syed and Kazi Shahbuddin, former Dewan of Baroda.

The Commission held its first full meeting (later it divided itself into sub-committees for making preliminary arrangements in different provinces) at Lahore, on December 5, 1886 and agreed upon a general plan of action. It also visited a number of important centres such as Lahore, Allahabad, Jubbulpore, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta and interviewed some hundreds of witnesses, both official and non-official.

But before holding its first meeting the Commission drew up a series of detailed questions bearing upon the subject-matter of the enquiry and based upon various schemes and suggestions put forth in official papers supplied by the Government of India. These were circulated to Local Governments for distribution to such persons, official and non-official, and to such associations and societies, and editors of newspapers, both English and Indian, as the local authorities selected.

A long and animated discussion took place on the circular containing these questions at the opening session of the second Congress held in Calcutta, and a Committee was appointed to report on the matter. The Committee made the following suggestions:

- (1) That the open Competitive Examinations be held simultaneously both in India and in England.
- (2) That the simultaneous examinations thus held be equally open to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects.
- (3) That the classified list be prepared according to merit.
- (4) That fair consideration to Sanskrit and Arabic among the

question. From one end of the country to the other the people, Hindus, Muhammadans, Jains, Buddhists and Christians, have to a man echoed the cry from Calcutta." (*Hindoo Patriot*, January 7, 1878). Also see an editorial on the same subject in the *Bengalee*, October 13, 1877, and *Speeches of Lal Mohan Ghose* for similar agitation in England.

subjects of examinations be given by Civil Service Commissioners.

(5) That the age of candidates eligible for admission be not less than 19, or as recommended by Sir C. Aitchison, more than 23 years.

(6) That simultaneous examinations being granted, the Statutory Civil Service⁴ be closed for first appointments.

(7) That the appointments in the Statutory Civil Service under the existing rules be still left open to the Members of the Uncovenanted Service⁵ and to professional men of proved merit and ability.

(8) That all appointments requiring educational qualifications, other than covenanted first appointments, be filled by Competitive Examinations held in the different provinces and open in each province to such natural-born subjects of Her Majesty as were residents thereof.

These suggestions were also put forward in one form or another before the Commission by most of the Hindu leaders. They urged in particular: (1) open competitive tests; (2) simultaneous examinations; (3) the abolition of the Statutory Service. The majority of Muslim witnesses, however, opposed all these three demands. They did not favour open competitive tests because, as the Commission explained in its Report, they "feel that, in the present circumstances of the country, important

⁴ The Statutory Civil Service was created by an Act in 1870 which permitted Indians of proved merit and ability to be employed in the Civil Service without passing any test. In 1879 further rules were passed for making such selections, under which, young men of good family and social status were to be given special preference. This was done under the express instructions of Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy, who was very particular about strengthening the "native" aristocracy. In a letter to his Chief, Lord Salisbury, soon after his assumption of office, he wrote: "To secure completely, and efficiently utilise, the Indian aristocracy is, I am convinced, the most important problem now before us." See Lady Betty Balfour's *History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, 109.

⁵ The Uncovenanted Service included the very large number of public servants who filled appointments not reserved by statute for members of the Covenanted Civil Service, and were recruited from the talent, for the most part "native", which was then procurable in India. However the use of the word "uncovenanted" was purely technical.

classes of the community are practically debarred from success in examinations designed mainly as tests of educational qualifications."⁶ Other reasons were also advanced by some Muslim witnesses. For instance Munshi Muharram Ali Chisti, editor of the influential Muslim newspaper *Rafiq-i-Hind* feared that a system of open competition would put into power "men of low caste and manners" and would deprive "persons of good manners and high family" from positions which they had held "for generations".⁷ Syed Husain Bilgrami, who later became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, opposed competition not only because it would deprive the Muslims of all share in Government but also because "competition" did not test anything "but the power of assimilating knowledge—nay, perhaps of only storing it up for reproduction on the application of the proper stimulus". "Capacity for physical endurance, power of muscle and sinew, moral capability, fearlessness of character—these are not meted by a literary test."⁸

Another prominent Muslim witness, Nawab Muniz Nawaz Jung Bahadur, told the Commission that they should never overlook the fact that "nowhere more than in India are respect and obedience accorded to rank, to interest and to influence". "They cannot be set aside", he emphasised, "in any wide scheme of utilizing the indigenous talents of this country without incurring risks." Muslims might be backward in education but were they not the heirs to a great imperial past? Were they not more loyal to the British Raj than the majority community? Did they not understand the intricacies of Government better than the "upstart" Hindus? Competitive tests would reduce the Muslims to "nullity" in administration. "Therefore", demanded the Nawab, "there should be no competitive examinations, whether limited or open, for any service".⁹

Again, when the President of the Commission pointed out that the Muslims themselves were to be blamed for their backwardness, he was asked not to make the "present generation" suffer for the sins of the "past generation". But how long, what-

⁶ *Report of the Public Service Commission*, 48.

⁷ *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission* (Punjab), I, 203.

⁸ *Ibid.* (Lower Provinces of Bengal including Assam), IV, 79.

⁹ *Ibid.* (Madras including Coorg), V, 232-45.

ever be the reasons, were these "favours", and "privileges" and "safeguards" to continue?

"Do you know", K. L. Nulker, a member of the Commission, asked an eminent Muslim headmaster, "this is an age for competition in all branches of human industry?"

"Yes."

"Well, taking that as a fact, how long would you wait to see Muhammadans coming abreast of others?"

"I cannot fix a period but perhaps twenty-five years hence they may be on an equal footing with the rest. It may not be fair to others to give special facilities to the members of a particular religious body but it is expedient. I do not think Muhammadans would work hard enough to catch up with the Hindus if special facilities were not given. It may make them despondent and hopeless."¹⁰

The Muslim witnesses did not demand more than what they considered was their legitimate share of employment; in other words they would be content to have jobs in proportion to their population. But that would have given them at least double the number of posts they already held, thus depriving the Hindus of some of the jobs that they occupied. That is why the Hindu witnesses opposed laying down any fixed Hindu-Muslim proportion in the Service. Kashinath Telang, for instance, was emphatic in its rejection. "I don't think," he told the Commission, "such hard and fast rules work well."¹¹ Similarly Babu Rash Behari Ghose asked the Commission not to allow any interference in competitive tests. Fitzpatrick, a member of the Commission, reminded him that, without some checks, the Muslims would be eliminated. Would not that matter? Ghose replied: "Not so far as the efficiency of the public service is concerned and it is primarily that which we ought to pay regard to."¹²

Such remarks were enough to frighten the Muslim leaders, who were anxious to see that their educated class was absorbed in Government service; they were convinced that unless the Muslims were allowed certain reserved places, the Hindus' monopoly of jobs could never be broken.

¹⁰ Ibid. (Madras including Coorg), V, 305-06.

¹¹ Ibid. (Bombay including Sind), IV, 242.

¹² Ibid. (Lower Provinces of Bengal including Assam), VI, 242.

This same fear of being swept away by the Hindus prompted some Muslim leaders to oppose the holding of simultaneous examinations in England and India, though surprisingly enough majority of Muslim witnesses favoured it. Among the opponents, however, were men like Syed Ameer Ali and Mohsinul Mulk, who dreaded the introduction of simultaneous examinations in India.

They feared that the Indian Universities, which had already become machines for manufacturing B.A.s and M.A.s, would turn out an equal number of civil servants, thus swamping the country with them; and in such a development the Muslims could hardly have a chance of success.¹³ When the Commission reminded some of the Muslim witnesses that one of the main grounds on which simultaneous examinations had been demanded was the prejudice, said to be equally prevalent among the Hindus and Muslims, against crossing the sea, they denied it and asserted that their Prophet had enjoined on them to seek knowledge even if it were to be found in China.¹⁴ But apart from these arguments, their main objection against simultaneous examinations was, as Syed Mahmud explained to the Commission, "mainly political".¹⁵

Furthermore, they were absolutely firm on the retention of the Statutory Service and fought for it with a doggedness and tenacity which surprised even the Commission. This Service, instituted in 1879, was a compensation to the Indian nobility, which had become too degenerate to succeed in competitive tests; under its rules the authorities were "to nominate persons of good family, social position and general influence".¹⁶ "In no case, (except in Bengal)", revealed the Commissioners in their Report, "has a person been appointed a Statutory Civilian on the ground of intellectual qualifications alone. . . ."¹⁷

Though the Government was never enthusiastic about this

¹³ Ibid. (Lower Provinces of Bengal including Assam), VI, 196.

¹⁴ See on this point the evidence of Nawab Abdul Latif and his cross-examination by Sir Syed. (Ibid., VI, 267)

¹⁵ Ibid. (North Western Provinces and Oudh), II, 132-33.

¹⁶ See a resolution, dated December 24, 1879, issued by the Government of India on the subject.

¹⁷ *Report of the Public Service Commission*, 28.

Service,¹⁸ it was denounced by the educated Hindus, who had repeatedly asked for its abolition. But many prominent Muslim leaders looked upon it as "a wise provision", because it safeguarded evenly the interests of all sections, provided scope for those who could not compete in examinations, and encouraged administrative talents.¹⁹ They seemed to be particularly fond of it because of its emphasis on "high birth", "good family" and "social position". To quote Bilgrami: "I would rigidly exclude men of low caste. I would, as a rule, look with suspicion on men who had risen from low positions."²⁰

Beck, who was the best advocate of this class before the Commission, had prepared an elaborate scheme embodying their ideas and suggestions. Under this scheme, Government was to gather all necessary information from respectable "native" sources in each district about all young men of good old families receiving English education. Beck defined "good families" as those "which for many generations have held, or held till recent times, an honourable social position; it being understood that among families of equal antiquity, those of the purest descent and highest caste rank first."²¹ He further classified "good families", according to their importance: First would come those families which have *nasab* (pure descent) and have had *hasab* (social position) as well, such as, among Muslims, the old nawabs and zamindars; or descendants of celebrated saints; or sons of old nobles and administrators. And among Hindus, Rajput Chiefs; or prominent Brahmins; or high-class Banias. The criterion of determining members of this class was "the length of time a family had *hasab*". Next, those families, which had no *nasab*, but had *hasab*, like Kayesths, Jats, Kurmis, etc. Then,

¹⁸ The number of appointment, up to and including the year 1886, made under the Rules were 48, or an average of 6 a year, distributed thus:

Hindus: 27 + Muslims: 15 (out of which were 5 from N.W.P.)

Parsis: 2 + Sikhs: 2 + Burmans: 2.

¹⁹ See specially the evidence of Mirza Abbas Ali Beg on why the Muslims approved of the Statutory Service. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission* (Bombay including Sind), IV, 54.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, VI, 76.

²¹ For full text of Beck's scheme see *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission* (North Western Provinces and Oudh), II, 33-4.

there were those families who had *nasab*, but had no *hasab*, like Muslims of pure Arab blood. Lastly, those families, which had no *nasab* but only *hasab* for one generation. In this class were included men who were favoured by the British Government with high posts and estates for their loyalty during the revolt of 1857.

Under Beck's scheme, Government was to consider the claims of prospective candidates for the Civil Service according to this gradation. In consequence, the abolition of the Statutory Service would, according to Beck, be nothing short of madness; he wanted it to be enlarged and strengthened. He also deprecated the British way of appointing "natives" to important jobs, which had resulted in the almost complete exclusion of old families, which, by their character and tradition, had great hold on the people. To ignore them, Beck warned the Commission, was to invite political troubles.²²

Apparently, the Royal Commissioners were not much impressed by these arguments advanced by some prominent Muslim leaders. In their Report, they did not uphold any of their demands, save one, and that too more in deference to the wishes of the bureaucracy.²³

For instance, they strongly recommended the continuance of the competitive system, because past experience of more than thirty years justified it.

As regards the Statutory Service, they recommended its abolition and pointed out that it had been "for sufficiently good reasons condemned, not only by particular sections of the native community but also by the very large majority of officials, both European and Native, who have had practical experience of its working."²⁴

Only in regard to the demand for simultaneous examinations did they advise that such a step would be "inexpedient".²⁵

These recommendations were on the whole more favourable to the Hindus than the Muslims; but in spite of this, the edu-

²² Ibid., II, 34. ²³ *Report of the Public Service Commission*, 48-52.

²⁴ Ibid., 66-7.

²⁵ The three Hindu members of the Commission expressed their dissent against the "apprehensions" about the holding of simultaneous examination in India. (Ibid., 52).

cated Hindus persisted in their campaign, particularly for holding simultaneous examinations. At the fourth Congress held in Allahabad not long after the publication of the Royal Commission's Report, there was great resentment among the delegates at the "stingy" measures suggested by the Commissioners. The Congress would not budge from its original demands. "Nothing short of the reforms [suggested by the Congress]," said Eardley Norton, "will satisfy the people of this country."²⁶ Norton had the majority of delegates on his side; but there were some like Ramaswamy Mudaliar, a member of the Royal Commission, and K. T. Telang, who wanted the Congress to defer the whole question of Public Services for at least a year till the decision of the India Office on the recommendations of the Commission was known. Mudaliar asked the delegates not to forget the fact that before the Commissioners Indians themselves were not united on what they wanted. "After much evidence. . . , " he revealed, "we found that the majority of the Muhammadans on the one hand and of the Hindus on the other were not quite of one mind."²⁷

After some discussion an amendment, moved by Manmohan Ghose, was accepted as a compromise, which, while appreciating the concessions proposed in the Report of the Public Service Commission, put on record that "full justice will never be done to the people of this country until the open competitive examination for the Civil Services of India is held simultaneously in England and in India."²⁸

The Muslim leaders did not even protest; nor did the two Muslim members of the Commission, despite their disagreement with some of the most important recommendations, affix to the Report any note of dissent, as was done by the three Hindu members on the question of simultaneous examinations.²⁹

Some months later, the despatch of Lord Cross, the Secretary of State for India, was published; it came as a great disappointment to educated Hindus. Cross, while acknowledging that the proposals of the Royal Commissioners were "valuable

²⁶ *Annual Congress Report* (1888), 39. ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 52. ²⁹ See *Report of the Public Service Commission*, 52.

and appropriate",³⁰ was not prepared to introduce any parliamentary legislation to give effect to them. Moreover, he did not like the recommendations about the abolition of the Statutory Service and made it clear that the holding of simultaneous examinations was "altogether inadvisable".³¹ This was his attitude, notwithstanding the fact that the Government of India had, on the whole, approved the recommendations made by the Royal Commission.³²

Undaunted, the Congress carried on, with greater vigour than ever before, its campaign for holding simultaneous examinations and for an effective share in executive jobs. In London its Agency organised public meetings and issued pamphlets in order to enlist British support. Many M.P.'s also became interested in this problem with the result that on February 12, 1892 J. S. MacNeil moved an amendment to the Queen's Address, expressing regret that Her Majesty's speech "contained no proposals for redeeming the pledges, so frequently given by various Governments, that natives of Great Britain and natives of India should be placed on terms of equality in the matter of appointments in the public service and in facilities for competing for such appointments."³³

MacNeil recommended his amendment to the House by quoting one of Bright's epigrams that "India has become a pasture ground for smart young English gentlemen". He pointed out how Indians were "boycotted and cheated out of everything in their own country" and denounced the system by which "the poorest country in the world was saddled with the most expansive government".³⁴

³⁰ See the Despatch from the Secretary-of-State-for-India-in-Council to the Government of India, No. 104 Public, dated India Office, London, September 12, 1889.

³¹ Ibid. Also see the letter from the Under Secretary of State for India to the Secretary, Civil Service Commission, India Office, dated July 24, 1889, and the reply thereto from the Civil Service Commissioners to the Under Secretary of State for India dated August 19, 1889.

³² See the Despatch from the Government of India to the Rt. Hon. Viscount Cross, G.C.B., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 58 Public, dated Simla, October 9, 1888.

³³ *Hansard* (Indian Debates): Session 1892, 16.

³⁴ Ibid., 16-18.

In replying to the charges, Curzon, as Under Secretary of State, said that instead of condemning Government for promises unredeemed, MacNeil ought to congratulate them upon the good results already achieved. In the same vein, Sir Richard Temple reminded the House that there would be no Indian Empire but for "the strong arm, the steady nerve and the cool head of the British".³⁵ The amendment was not pressed for voting and was withdrawn.

But that was not the end of the matter. It was again raised in the House of Commons on June 2, 1893, when H. W. Paul moved a resolution that "all open competitive examinations, heretofore held in England alone, for appointments to the Civil Service of India, shall henceforth be held simultaneously both in India and England, such examinations in both countries being identical in their nature, and all who compete being finally classified in one list according to merit."³⁶ In moving the resolution Paul disclaimed any originality for it. He said a similar proposal was placed before the House as early as 1868 by the late Mr. Fawcett.³⁷ In seconding the motion, Naoroji pleaded with Parliament to place Indian issues above party politics. In the past, the Indians, he said, had never hesitated to express their gratitude to Conservatives and Liberals alike.³⁸

In replying to the debate George Russell, Under Secretary of State for India, warned critics that any departure in the policy would be fraught with grave danger to the peace and security

³⁵ Ibid., 20-27.

³⁶ Ibid., Session 1893, 338-46.

³⁷ "The terms of his [i.e. Fawcett's] Amendment were derived from the Report of a Committee appointed in the year 1858 by the Secretary of State for India, of which Sir John Willoughby was Chairman and Mr. Mangles, Mr. Arbuthnot, Mr. Macnaughten and Sir Erskine Perry were members. In the course of the Debate in 1868 Mr. Fawcett met with what he might call a sympathetic refusal of his request from Sir Stafford Northcote, who was then Secretary for India. He was opposed with very great vigour, in a speech of immense eloquence and power, expressed in the most picturesque and racy vernacular, by his right hon. friend the Secretary for Scotland [Sir G. Trevelyan] who, if he might judge from the right hon. gentleman's remarks on that occasion, assumed, and perhaps with justice, that having written the Competition Wallah, he had done as much for the natives of India as could be reasonably expected." (Ibid., 337-38).

³⁸ *Hansard* (Indian Debates): Session 1893, 346-52.

of India. Referring to the heterogeneous racial and religious character of the country, he said: "It is because we fear that if my Hon'ble friend's proposition were carried out that these jealousies, rivalries and hostilities between race and race and between creed and creed would be kindled that we oppose the motion and only on that ground. . . ." ³⁹

Much to the Government's astonishment, the resolution was carried by a narrow majority.⁴⁰ No sooner did the Congress leaders learn of this than a vigorous campaign was started by them both in London and Calcutta to give immediate effect to the decision of the House of Commons.⁴¹ In the House of Lords there was considerable resentment and the Marquis of Salisbury even questioned the authority of the House of Commons to interfere in the executive affairs of India.⁴²

The British Government, which was headed by Gladstone at this time, was embarrassed by these developments. They did not like the resolution but were not prepared, as was suggested by many Conservative M.P.'s and Peers, to ignore it. Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State, in spite of an adverse vote in his Council,⁴³ referred the matter to the Government of India for their immediate consideration and specifically asked them "under what conditions this resolution could be carried into effect".⁴⁴

The Government of India took six months for sending its

³⁹ Ibid., 359-66. Also see an editorial on Paul's resolution in the *Muhammadan Observer*, May 31, 1894.

⁴⁰ The House divided: Ayes 7 and Noes 84. *Hansard* (Indian Debates): Session 1893, 374.

⁴¹ Within less than six months of the passing of the resolution, Sir C. Dalrymple, Chairman of the Committee of Public Petitions, announced that he had received 44 petitions signed by 20,232 Indians in favour of simultaneous examinations and one against it. (Ibid., 774).

⁴² Ibid., 389.

⁴³ See the "Minutes recorded by the Council of India" in the Parliamentary Paper relating to Civil Service Examinations, C. 7075. As Sir J. Strachey put it: "The Despatch will be sent to the Government of India but I trust that it will be sent under the strongest protests which the members of this Council can record." (pp. 4-5).

⁴⁴ In a letter to the Governor-General-of-India-in-Council, No. 61 Public, dated India Office, London, June 22, 1893.

reply, in which they explained why it was not possible to give effect to the resolution. This is not the place to go into the many reasons advanced but one of the most important considerations which weighed with them was that the policy as advocated by the House of Commons would exclude "the most valuable and capable assistance of races such as the Muslims and the Sikhs, accustomed to rule and possessing exceptional strength of character but deficient in literary education."⁴⁵ In coming to this conclusion the Government of India relied greatly on the views of Sir Charles Crossthwaite, the Lt.-Governor of the Punjab, and Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, the Lt.-Governor of the N.W. Province, who had both spent more than thirty-five years in India, holding responsible positions in various provinces.

Sir Charles's main objection to competitive tests and simultaneous examinations was that such steps would not only be "a great injustice" to the Muslims but would also be "a huge political mistake". If there was to be competition for jobs, Muslims must be given a fixed number of places.⁴⁶ Similarly Sir Dennis pointed out that the advance of civilisation, far from improving the relations between the Hindus and Muslims, had only exacerbated them. But for the English officials, he emphasised, there would be no impartiality or justice in the administration. An Indian, unless he became completely denationalized, could not help being influenced by communal considerations. Sir Dennis referred to the mass of petitions, received almost daily, full of charges and insinuations against "native" officials, complaining, for instance, that there were too many Hindu officials in one district; or too many Muslims in the other; or that the Hindus were being harassed by certain Muslim officers or vice versa. In a similar vein it was urged that, because so and so was an Arya Samajist, no one who did not belong to the Samaj had a ghost of a chance to get justice from him; or that, because so and so was a Muslim, he was bound

⁴⁵ The Government of India in their letter No. 62 of 1893 dated November 1, 1893. See "Parliamentary Papers relating to the Question of holding Simultaneous Examinations in India and England for the Indian Civil Service", C.7378, 13.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 40.

to interfere, in his official capacity, with some sacred place of the Hindus.⁴⁷

Though absolving the higher "native" officers of many of these charges, Sir Dennis said that there was such strong prejudice among the people on such matters that often they made these imputations "with a thorough belief in their truth and this in itself is a serious matter from an administrative point of view."⁴⁸ Moreover, he was not sure whether even the best of "native" officials, when up against serious sectional disputes, would be able to adopt drastic measures against their own group, if duty so demanded it.

Similar views were also expressed by other provincial governors; and the Government of India in a voluminous report strongly advised the Secretary of State against the holding of simultaneous examinations or, for that matter, against reopening in any way the question of Public Services. But hardly did Kimberley consider these views when, as a result of the defeat of the Liberal Party in the general election of 1894, a change of Government took place, Henry Fowler replacing Kimberley at the India Office.

Fowler had little sympathy with "native" aspirations. He was also a firm believer in the efficiency of British officials. In consequence, soon after his assumption of office, he wrote to the Governor-General that "Her Majesty's Government agreed with the Government of India that no change in the system of public services was called for".⁴⁹ In this connection he quoted approvingly the remarks of Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick about the "two great hostile parties" and emphasised that a reasonable proportion of the higher offices must be allotted to the Muslims.

This decision surprised not only Congress enthusiasts but also many M.P.'s and British publicists, who did not expect from the Secretary of State such "flagrant defiance" of the wish of

⁴⁷ "Parliamentary Papers relating to the Question of holding Simultaneous Examinations in India and England for the Indian Civil Service", C.7378, 50.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ See the Despatch from the Secretary-of-State-for-India-in-Council to His Excellency the Rt. Hon. the Governor-General-of-India-in-Council, No. 37, Public, dated India Office, London, April 19, 1894.

the House of Commons.⁵⁰ In India the disappointment was so bitter that the Congress organ in London, *India*, warned the British Government: "To have dashed the hopes, and apparently the well-grounded hopes, of a nation is no light matter, and it is certain that India will resound for sometime to come with protests of indignation."⁵¹

The Times, on the other hand, warmly congratulated Fowler on his "firmness" and commended his action in preventing the ascendancy of the Bengali over the Muslim, Sikh and Rajput. To put the "babu" in a responsible position would be "a singular piece of imbecility and distrust in ourselves".⁵²

As we have seen, Muslim opposition was given as one of the main reasons for not holding simultaneous examinations. This contention was, however, challenged by William Digby, who, in a lengthy statement, accused the Royal Commission of taking "unfair" evidence and, in consequence, coming to wrong conclusions.⁵³

No one took Digby's objections seriously because they were not only weak but clumsy. In such matters the educated Muslims always looked to Sir Syed for a lead and he was an uncompromising opponent of simultaneous examinations. Hence,

⁵⁰ See an article, "Entrance to the Civil Service" by Professor A. F. Murison in *India*, November, 1895.

⁵¹ *India*, June, 1894. Also see editorials on Fowler's despatch in the *Bengalee* of June 2, 16, 30; July 7, 21; August 2, 11, 18; and November 24, 1894.

⁵² *The Times*, London, May 24, 1894.

⁵³ Quoted in *India*, July, 1894. The allegations were first made by Digby in two letters to Lord Cross, Secretary of State for India, in 1889. The distribution of Muslim witnesses interviewed by the Commission was as under:

Province	Invited	Voluntary		
Punjab	13	2		
N.W.P. and Oudh	9	2		
C.P.	4	—		
Bombay	10	1		
Madras	3	6		
Bengal	14	2		
	<hr/> 53	<hr/> 13	+	= 66

no sooner was the India Office decision made public than the Anglo-Muhammadan Defence Association, in a unanimous resolution by its Council, expressed "its sense of appreciation and gratitude" to Fowler on his "wise, beneficent and statesmanlike policy". In its opinion the holding of simultaneous examinations would have been "most prejudicial to the stability of the British Government" because it would not only have reduced "unduly" the number of British officials but also lowered "the efficiency and character" of Indian administration.⁵⁴

The Indian Parliamentary Party made some protests but Fowler did not pay much attention to them. In fact the *St. James' Gazette* suggested to the aggrieved M.P.'s that, if they felt so strongly on the subject, they could show their discontent in the division lobbies.⁵⁵ But such a step would not have achieved their purpose because in the new House Fowler was sure of securing a majority in favour of his stand. *The Statesman*, therefore, advised the Indian Parliamentary Party that, in the interest of "political expediency", it should "abandon this particular question".⁵⁶

And so it remained for many years to come until Curzon brought it to the fore again by abolishing, in 1904, competitive examinations for Public Services.⁵⁷ His action was severely condemned not only by the Hindu press but also by the *Statesman*. The Muslim leaders, on the contrary, were delighted. So were certain Tory circles in Britain. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, one of their chief organs, in commending the Government of India's decision, wrote with biting sarcasm against the 'babus'.

⁵⁴ See the *M.A.O. College Magazine*, February 1, 1895. The resolution was moved by Sir Syed and seconded by Mohsinul Mulk. Also see an editorial entitled, "The Muhammadan Defence Association and Simultaneous Examinations", wherein the newspaper said: "We see in all this the Roman hand of Mr. Theodore Beck, the Principal of the Aligarh College, the gentleman who has had a large share in shaping the policy of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in relation to the Congress movement." (*The Bengalee*, January 12, 1895).

⁵⁵ Quoted by the *Statesman*, June 23, 1894.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Also see the editorial on the subject in the *Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), June 1, 1894.

⁵⁷ See the resolution of the Government of India (Home Dept.) on the subject dated Calcutta, March 11, 1904.

"In all countries", it pointed out, "probably there were people who can pass examinations and do nothing else; but this perverse aptitude is a perfect disease among some classes of our Indian fellow subjects. The consequence is seen in the development of a 'soi-disant' educated class, devoid too often of capacity, too numerous for the employments available, disinclined for the commonplace work, and prone to relieve discontent by seditious writing in the native newspapers." *The Pall Mall Gazette*⁵⁸ spoke in high terms of the action of the Anglo-Indian administrators in Sudan, who had "made it one of the fundamental principles of their education scheme that English should be taught sparingly in order to avoid the propagation of the 'Native Competition-wallah'." Even *Lloyds' Sunday Newspaper*, well-known for the sobriety of its views, upheld Curzon's decision to abolish competitive tests and said that "the gain to the cause of genuine education and to the State by this change of system will be very great."⁵⁹

But the Liberal organs were bitter in their condemnation. In a lengthy editorial the *Manchester Guardian* referred to the "two tones contending" in the Viceroy's voice: "There is the tone of the father of India telling his child home truths, cruel only to be kind, and seeing for her better than she can see for her poor self; and there is the tone of the aghast Anglo-Indian, wondering what things are coming to, with these educated natives pushing themselves into all sorts of public work as they do." Did Curzon abolish the competitive tests because he was afraid of the natives and their capabilities? "We impute", the newspaper continued, "no mean or merely personal fear to Lord Curzon. If there were an examination for the post of Viceroy next week, we believe he would get it. . . ."⁶⁰ Under such circumstances, the newspaper added, the Viceregal action was not only inexplicable but absolutely unjustifiable.

To the Congress leaders, however, the official opposition was not so inexplicable; they knew why the bureaucracy was bent on thwarting their efforts. What worried them was the Muslim reaction, specially when it was becoming evident with every

⁵⁸ Quoted by *India*, March 18, 1904. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, April 15, 1904.

year that passed that the Muslim candidates fared no worse than their Hindu competitors in Civil Service examinations. In fact in 1899 a Muslim candidate, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, headed the list at the final examination for the Indian Civil Service;⁶¹ some years earlier, another Muslim, one Tyabji, had also stood first in a similar contest.⁶² Commenting on these achievements, *India*, the official Congress organ in London, wrote: "Let it be noted that no Hindu, not even Mr. Atul Chunder Chatterjee, has ever achieved this distinction. After this, why should our Muhammadan fellow-subjects despair of their educational future or fight shy of competitive examinations?"⁶³ Blaming the Muslim leaders for ignoring "the mental calibre and the moral stamina of the great community to which they belong", *India* accused them of corrupting the rising Muslim generation and wishing "to perpetuate the practices which have secured to them the positions which they enjoy."

However, in the later part of our period, more particularly during the regime of Curzon, there were many other problems which seemed to have occupied the Government's attention. Disgusted with the state of affairs as prevailing then, the new Governor-General set up several Commissions and Investigation Boards to inquire into the different departments of the State such as Police, Railways, Public Works and Universities. He kept himself continually busy trying to give effect to the many radical changes the various Commissioners recommended for "increasing the efficiency and reducing the excessive expenditure" of the Government departments. Furthermore, the occurrence of famine also impelled the introduction of many urgent reforms in administration. Curzon carried them out with gusto.

⁶¹ See an editorial on "Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan" in the *Moslem Chronicle*, November 18, 1899. *The Civil and Military Gazette* described a Muslim's heading the I.C.S. list as "most remarkable", to which the *Tribune* retorted: "We do not know why [it is so remarkable]? As we have often pointed out, the vast bulk of the Muslim community is the same in blood and race as the Hindu and there is no reason why there should be any difference in physical or intellectual characteristics between them." (Quoted in *India*, December 22, 1899).

⁶² See a comment on Tyabji's success in the *Indian Spectator*, July 19, 1885.

⁶³ *India*, December 15, 1899.

All in all, except for counteracting the agitation against his "Bengal" partition scheme, in none of the measures initiated did he lose sight of efficiency or pay attention to communal or other such considerations. He never interested himself in factional fights or, for that matter, in any kind of political controversies. That was the reason why he was unpopular not only with the Congress but also with the Muslim leaders, towards whom he was no less unsympathetic.⁶⁴

Curzon was opposed to making any political or administrative concessions to the educated "natives". He had no faith in their capabilities. For him India existed only as a scene of the Englishman's labours, with the toiling millions of the country—eighty per cent of the population—as the beneficiaries. As for the remaining twenty per cent, they might, "for aught they are worth, . . . as well be gently swept into the sea".⁶⁵ He was conscious of the growing strength of public opinion in India; but was not prepared "to be kow-towed" by it. In fact he once vaingloriously told his friend, Sir A. Godley: "No one has more consistently defied it in some matters than I."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ The following editorial comments from the *St. James' Gazette* will bear this out:

It will be remembered that a short time ago we gave some extracts from an Indian journal, representing educated Muhammadan opinion, which went to show that the Musalmans of India, while equally alive to the good intentions of the Viceroy, are not quite so satisfied as to his 'holding the scales even'. Complaints were made that he paid too exclusive attention to the opinion of the Hindus; and it was even intimated that the traditional Muhammadan attitude of aloofness from the Indian National Congress was in danger of being considerably modified. The satisfaction with the Governor-General's holding of the scales expressed by the President of the Congress to some extent confirms this view, though we do not for a moment believe that Lord Curzon in any marked degree favours any single section of the great conglomeration of peoples whom he rules in the name of King Edward. (*St. James' Gazette*, December 28, 1901).

Also see editorials on the same subject in the *Moslem Chronicle*, February 4, 1899, November 3, 1900, December 15 and 22, 1900, and January 12 and June 15, 1901, and Sir Walter Roper Lawrence's *The India We Served*, 244.

⁶⁵ See report of Lord Curzon's speech in *India*, January 19, 1906.

⁶⁶ Letter to Sir A. Godley (later Lord Kilbracken) dated January 27, 1904, quoted by Ronaldshay in his *Life of Lord Curzon*, II, 328.

Curzon's sole passion, during his stay in India, was "efficiency of administration";⁶⁷ that he believed was "a synonym for the contentment of the governed".⁶⁸ In consequence, he had little respect for, or even patience with, either political agitators or communal fighters; this is clear from his own admission: "Amid the numerous races and creeds of whom India is composed, while I have sought to understand the needs and to espouse the interests of each, my eye has always rested on a larger canvas, crowded with untold numbers, the real people of India, as distinct from any class or section." For Curzon the masses were something entirely different from the English-educated class; he found little in common between the people and the "native" aspirants, Hindu or Muslim. Therefore he never believed that the so-called Indian leaders, Hindu or Muslim, did, or ever could, represent "all those sombre millions".⁶⁹

The interests of the people, Curzon believed, were far more safe in the hands of English officials than in those of inexperienced, half-educated "natives". To quote Curzon again, "The highest ranks of civil employment in India must as a general rule be held by Englishmen for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of Government, the habits of mind, the vigour of character, which are essential for the task."⁷⁰ At another place he was still more contemptuous of the Indian character: "... undoubtedly truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly

⁶⁷ *Speeches of Lord Curzon*, III, 409.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Also see his speech at the Dinner of the United Service Club, Simla, on September 30, 1905. (*Lord Curzon in India*, edited by Sir Thomas Raleigh, 564-65.)

⁶⁹ See his speech at the Guildhall on being admitted to the Freedom of the City of London. (*Speeches of Lord Curzon*, IV, 1-21). Also in his last speech in India, delivered at the Byculla Club, Bombay, on November 16, 1905, he said: "When I am vituperated by those who claim to speak for the Indian people, I feel no resentment and no pain. For I search my conscience and I ask myself who and what are the real Indian people; and I rejoice that it has fallen to my lot to do something to alleviate theirs, and that I leave them better than I found them." (Ibid., 237).

⁷⁰ "Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India" (1904), 560.

honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic wile have always been held in much repute."⁷¹ In this estimation, he made no distinction between the Hindu and the Muslim.

But notwithstanding the "native incapacities", the Governor-General contended that the British had been most generous in giving employment to their subjects. In support of this, his Government issued a long resolution setting forth figures of "native" and European employment and showing the great progress that the former had made since 1867. "Will anyone", Curzon asked, "tell me in the face of these figures that our administration is unduly favourable to the Europeans or grudging to the native element? I hold, on the contrary, that it is characterised by a liberality unexampled in the world. You may search through history and since the days of the Roman Empire, you will find no such trust."⁷²

This statement was immediately challenged in the Indian press; Curzon himself was subjected to vilification, and even abuse. As the *Maratha*, the English organ started by Tilak, observed: "Statistics can be made to prove anything."⁷³ Besides, from many quarters it was suggested that Curzon's figures were based not on "fact" but "fiction" evolved out of "his imperialistic fancies."⁷⁴ Gokhale challenged the Governor-General in the Imperial Council and, by a separate set of figures drawn from the same official sources, tried to prove how misleading was Curzon's analysis.⁷⁵ Similar efforts were also made by other Indians; but perhaps the most exhaustive charts were prepared by G. Subramaniaiyer for the *Hindustan Review* wherein he

⁷¹ In his Convocation Address to the Calcutta University on February 11, 1905. See *Convocation Addresses*, III, 978-95.

⁷² See "Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India" (1904), 562. Also see the Resolution of the Government of India as to results of a special enquiry in every branch of the administration with the object of ascertaining how far Europeans and Eurasians enjoy a disproportionate share of patronage. (Statistics for the years 1867, 1877, 1887, 1897 and 1903 under three lists (A) General Table; (B) Provincial Tables; (C) Departmental Distribution. *The Gazette of India Supplement*, June 4, 1904.)

⁷³ Quoted in *India*, July 15, 1904.

⁷⁴ *The Hindustan Review*, October 1904, 321.

⁷⁵ Gokhale's tables are to be found as Appendix C in the "Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India" (1905), 193-200.

tried to show how "it is in regard to the superior appointments, appointments of trust and responsibility. . . that we have been treated with the greatest injustice".⁷⁶

Curzon paid little attention to such criticisms; but his successor proved a greater realist. Lord Minto soon realised that it would be dangerous to ignore "native aspirations" completely. In a letter to the Secretary of State, he explained:

Suppose the designs of the extreme men are so mischievous, impracticable, and sinister as anybody pleases. Call them a band of plotters, agitators, what you will. Is that any reason why we should at every turn back up all executive authority through thick and thin, right or wrong? Surely that is the very way to play the agitator's game.

However one need not go into the changes, both in outlook and administration, that Minto, in collaboration with his eminent colleague, Morley, brought about; that is a subject beyond the scope of this work.

But there were some other administrative questions, raised during the period under review, to which a passing reference may be made. Mostly they were raised by the Congress in the form of demands for administrative reforms. For instance, ever since its inception, the Congress had been asking for the separation of the Executive from the Judiciary or the appointment of "native" jurors. Little was done by the Government in this respect because, as a Lt. Governor once pointed out, such reforms would result in a "far-reaching and organic change" which in its turn "would be simply disastrous."⁷⁷ The Muslim leaders also did not have much love for such an "innovation"; they feared that at the back of all such demands was the Hindu "lust for power"—the desire to make themselves "superiors". Therefore the "discontent and heartburning" among the Muslims over the Hindu demands was, according to the *Moslem*

⁷⁶ See his article, "Employment of Indians in the Public Service—Fiction and Fact", accompanied with charts, in the *Hindustan Review*, October 1904, 321-44. Also see an editorial on this in the *Moslem Chronicle*, May 7, 1904.

⁷⁷ See editorial comments applauding the Lt.-Governor's remark in the *Moslem Chronicle*, April 4, 1896.

Chronicle, "only a product of the most natural feelings in humanity".⁷⁸

The Muslims did not view the rise of the Hindus to responsible positions without misgivings; the Hindus on their part did not take any concrete steps to allay Muslim fears. The Congress leaders, no doubt, made eloquent speeches on Hindu-Muslim unity; but they never really grappled with the mounting situation. Moreover, the attitude of the Hindu press, particularly in regard to Government jobs and favours, was not very helpful. For instance the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* rarely missed an opportunity of warning the Government that "generosity" towards the Muslims was most misplaced because they were used to committing "offences. . . of the gravest character possible".⁷⁹ *The Indian Nation* had even prepared a list of the offences "which the Musalmans lately gave to the authorities".⁸⁰ Similarly the *Hindoo Patriot* reminded officials of the folly of their showing favours to the Muslims: "Yes, our Government is leaving no stone unturned to patronise the Muhammadans. But still the success achieved, as might have been expected and as we had repeatedly warned, has been most lamentably poor indeed."⁸¹ The Muslim reply to such attacks was often equally provocative. "While our Hindu fellow subjects", wrote the *Moslem Chronicle*, "are absorbing the public money by occupying the highly paid offices of the State, making themselves all the richer from the money wrung from the bare backs and dropping sweat of the labouring Muslims, our community is losing every day all places of emoluments and trust, and the time is not far distant when our life and liberty, our honour and prestige would be placed at the mercy of an alien race. . ."⁸²

Consequently, the Muslims did not join the Congress even in such demands as the reduction of Home Charges;⁸³ the stop-

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ See an editorial, "Generous to the one and strict to the other", in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, August 25, 1897.

⁸⁰ Quoted in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, August 25, 1897.

⁸¹ *The Hindoo Patriot*, October 24, 1895.

⁸² *The Moslem Chronicle*, May 9, 1895.

⁸³ See the *M.A.O. College Magazine*, March 1, 1897, wherein this demand of the Congress is bitterly ridiculed.

page of the economic drain;⁸⁴ and the reduction of military and frontier expenses.⁸⁵ In every move they suspected some sinister motive. Further, notwithstanding the admirable researches of Naoroji and Wacha in the field of economics, Beck and Morison were able to persuade the Muslim leaders that, far from growing poorer, India under the British was becoming richer than ever before. The Congress critics of Government's economic policy, according to these two English professors, were "no better than ungrateful schoolboys dealing with subjects far above their comprehension"⁸⁶ or, worse still, "like ill-bred creatures biting the hand that feeds them".⁸⁷

Sir Syed and his colleagues were not well-versed in modern economics; therefore they could not distinguish the superficial from the real. Looking at themselves and those around them they were prepared to believe that *all* Indians were prosperous and happy under the British Raj. They had developed a kind of "divine faith" in its superiority; they dreaded the idea of any violent change in the existing system which might land them in a worse situation. The Hindus, on the other hand, were all for "the conquest of the bureaucracy" by "Indianisation" of the administrative set-up; they pursued it relentlessly as "the object of all their ambitions".⁸⁸

⁸⁴ See Theodore Morison's *Economic Transition in India*, 182-242.

⁸⁵ See Sir Syed's speech against reduction of any kind of military expenses at a general meeting of the M.A.O. Defence Association on December 28, 1896 at Meerut. (*The Pioneer*, January 13, 1897).

⁸⁶ See Beck's editorial, "Congress Economics", in the *M.A.O. College Magazine* (March 1, 1897). Also his articles on "Is India getting poorer?" in the *Pioneer* of March 27 and April 2 and 19, 1898.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Also see Morison's article on the same subject in the *Pioneer*, June 2, 1898.

⁸⁸ Joseph Chailley's *Administrative Problems of British India*, 547. Sir Henry Cotton in his Presidential Address to the twelfth annual session of the Indian National Congress also remarked: "The keynote of administrative reform is the gradual substitution of Indian for European official agency (Hear, hear). This is the one end towards which you are concentrating your efforts, and the concession of this demand is the only means of satisfying the most reasonable of your legitimate aspirations." See the *Annual Congress Report* (1904), 41. Also see his *New India*, 119.

CHAPTER FIVE

Impact of English Education

FOR THE acquisition of wealth and social position in India, it was essential for the "natives" during this period to have some sort of English education; without it an entry into or even an access to the Government was not possible. Unlike the Hindus, who had gone miles ahead in the race of modernisation, the Muslims had just then taken to learning English; they had, therefore, a long and hard journey to traverse. Sir Syed continuously insisted that his co-religionists should concentrate all their energies on acquiring English education. To that end, every other consideration, he said, must be subordinated; without it, he emphasised, no progress, national or sectional, was even conceivable.¹

¹ See *Khulasai Karwai-e-yas deh Saleh* or "Proceedings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1896" compiled by Syed Mehdi Ali Khan (Urdu text), 5.

The situation, as it developed during this period, became more and more serious for the Muslims. To some of the causes which led to it, a reference has already been made; but one circumstance after another worked against them. They were unable to cope with the changes. Even the Royal Commission on Education, with Sir William Hunter at its head, could not find the correct solution to their ills; the many Muslim witnesses examined by the Royal Commissioners were equally vague and hesitant. Some of them tenaciously held that the absence of Islamic instruction and, still more, the injurious effects of English education in creating a disbelief in their own religion, and thus corrupting morals and manners, was the main obstacle to their progress; while there were others, rather small in number, who thought that religion had little to do with it.² As the Royal Commissioners in summarising their impressions put it:

The small proportion of Muhammadan teachers in Government institutions; the unwillingness of Government educational officers to accept the counsel and co-operation of Muhammadans; numerous minor faults in the departmental system; the comparatively small progress in real learning made by the pupils in Government schools; the practice among the well-to-do Muhammadans of educating their children at home; the indolence and improvidence too common among them; their hereditary love of the profession of arms; the absence of friendly intercourse between Muhammadans and Englishmen; the unwillingness felt by the better-born to associate with those lower in the social scale; the poverty nearly general among Muhammadans; the coldness of the Government towards the race; the use in Government schools of books whose tone was hostile or scornful towards the Muhammadan religion; these and a variety of other causes have been put forward at different times by members of the Muhammadan community to account for the scant

² See, in particular, the evidence of Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali in *Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee to Education Commission*, 213-24; and of Badruddin Tayabjee in *Education Commission (Bombay)*, II, 503-06. Also see the statement submitted to the Commission by Khan Bahadur Kazi Shahabudin. (*Ibid.*, Memorials, 56-61).

appreciation which an English education has received at their hands.³

The Royal Commissioners, however, were inclined to lay greater emphasis on some other factors such as pride of race, a memory of bygone superiority, religious fears, and a not unnatural attachment to the learning of Islam.⁴

Besides, there were also causes of a strictly educational character: the time spent by Muslim boys in memorising texts from the Quran, or on the learning of the Persian language, or receiving laborious religious instruction at the *maktabs*. Moreover, few Muslim parents could afford the "luxury" of English education for their children and therefore preferred them to become learned in Islam, which did not cost much, while, at the same time, it gave them a place of honour among the faithful.

All this kept Muslim boys away from the English-medium schools. Besides, the very small number who managed to join them did so at a much more advanced age than the Hindus. Further, while Hindu boys were being encouraged by their people to take wholeheartedly to secular studies such as English and mathematics, Muslim boys, even while attending these schools, were required to devote considerable time to religious instruction. On some of them, this dual ordeal had almost a demoralising effect.⁵

³ *Report of the Indian Education Commission*, 483. Also see the section, "Muhammadans", *Ibid.*, 483-507.

⁴ *Ibid.* J. Murray Mitcheil put this point of view more graphically: "They are convinced of the infinite superiority of Arabian and Persian literature to the productions of the West. They have been crushed by the strong hand of the Kaffir, and in things external must submit to his hated sway, but they scorn the thought that their minds also should be enslaved by his miserable books. What is Shakespeare or Milton compared with Hafiz or Sadi? What is the Bible to the Quran? They see the supple Hindu rush forward to imbibe the ideas of the Christian, and so vault into the fat pastures of Government employ; let him—it is worthy of an idolator; but no true believer should stoop so low." See his account of the "Musalmans of Bengal" in the *Report of the General Missionary Conference* held at Allahabad (1872-1873), 68.

⁵ As Syed Abu Fazl pointed out, "I think it is the neglect of English education, and this neglect is the consequence of their prejudices". He added, "They used to show hatred towards the English education, they

Muslim backwardness in English education was not confined to any particular province; it was so in practically every part of India; even the Education Commission, despite the cautiousness with which it handled this problem, underlined this fact and urged upon the Government to adopt the following measures to stem the tide of disaster which threatened to overtake the Muslims as a result of it: ⁶

(1) That the special encouragement of Muslim education be regarded as a legitimate charge on Local, Municipal and Provincial Funds;

did not make themselves qualified, and they even supposed that the English education would greatly demoralize their character. . . . The Muhammadans of India have lifted their hands against themselves. . . ." See his book *On the Muhammadans of India* (Calcutta, 1872), 14-15.

⁶ Some idea of this disastrous situation can be had from the following table, especially prepared by Sir Syed from *Annual Reports on Public Instruction* and submitted to the Government in 1878. The table covers the period of twenty preceding years:

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Total No. of graduates</i>	<i>No. of Muslim graduates</i>
Doctor in Law	6	Nil
Honours in Law	4	Nil
Bachelor in Law	705	6
Licentiate in Law	235	5
Bachelor in Civil Engineering	36	Nil
Licentiate in Civil Engineering	51	Nil
Master of Arts	326	5
Bachelor of Arts	1,343	30
Doctor in Medicine	4	Nil
Honours in Medicine	2	Nil
Bachelor in Medicine	58	1
Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery	385	8
TOTAL	3,155	57

Quoted in the *Report of the Punjab Provincial Committee of the Education Commission*, 116. Nor was the position in primary schools much better. For instance in 1880-81 in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa there were 156,081 Muslim boys out of a total Muslim population of 21 millions. See the *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal* for 1880-81, 6.

(2) That indigenous Muslim schools be liberally encouraged to add purely secular subjects to their courses of instruction;

(3) That special standards for Muslim Primary Schools be prescribed;

(4) That Hindustani be made the principal medium for imparting instruction to Muslims in Primary and Middle Schools, except in localities where the community desired that some other language be adopted;

(5) That the official vernacular, in places where it was not the actual vernacular, be added as a voluntary subject to the curriculum of Primary and Middle Schools for Muslims maintained from public funds; and that arithmetic and accounts be taught through the medium of that vernacular;

(6) That in localities where Muslims formed a fair proportion of the population, provision be made in Middle and High Schools, maintained from public funds, for imparting instruction in the Hindustani and Persian languages;

(7) That higher English education for Muslims, being the kind of education in which that community needed special help, be liberally encouraged;

(8) That, where necessary, a graduated system of special scholarships for Muslims be established;

(9) That, in all classes of schools maintained from public funds, a certain proportion of free studentships be expressly reserved for Muslim students;

(10) That in places where educational endowments for the benefit of Muslims existed, and were under the management of Government, the funds arising from such endowments be devoted to the advancement of education among Muslims exclusively;

(11) That where Muslim endowments existed and were under the management of private individuals or bodies, inducements by liberal grants-in-aid be offered to them to establish English-teaching schools or colleges on the grants-in-aid system;

(12) That, where necessary, Normal Schools or classes for the training of Muslim teachers be established;

(13) That wherever instruction was given in Muslim

schools through the medium of Hindustani, endeavours be made to secure, as far as possible, Muslim teachers to give such instruction;

(14) That Muslim inspecting officers be employed more largely than hitherto for the inspection of Primary Schools for Muslims;

(15) That associations for the promotion of Muslim education be recognised and encouraged;

(16) That in the Annual Reports on Public Instruction a special section be devoted to Muslim education;

(17) That the attention of Local Governments be invited to the question of the proportion in which patronage was to be distributed among educated Muslims and others.

These recommendations, as can be seen, were very exhaustive and covered most of the Muslim grievances. Both the Supreme and Provincial Governments were becoming responsive, though they were not able to take any immediate action to remedy the situation. Even at this time there lurked in the minds of the officials a certain uneasiness regarding any special favours being shown to Muslims; such a step would not be in keeping with their policy of religious neutrality. Therefore the Local Governments could only promise "to do all that they equitably can do to assist" the Muslims in their campaign for English education;⁷ while the Supreme Government emphasised that it was their "earnest desire . . . to treat all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in India with absolute impartiality and see all alike benefiting by the protection, the patronage and the assistance of the State."⁸

But not withstanding these notes of caution, many of the Provincial Governments did try to put into operation some of the most important recommendations of the Education Commission. For instance, indigenous Muslim Schools were actively encouraged by the Government in many parts of India; special

⁷ See the replies from various Local Governments and Administrations on these recommendations given in *Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Home Department*, No. CCV, Serial No. 2, 372-75.

⁸ See the Government of India's Resolution (Home Department) No. 7-215-25 dated July 15, 1885.

provision for the teaching of Urdu was made wherever possible; Muslim teachers and inspectors were more liberally employed; special scholarships for the Muslims were instituted; in many schools poor Muslim students were exempted from the payment of fees. More attention was also paid to the proper management of Muslim educational endowments and *wakfs*; and, in educational reports prepared by Government officials, separate reviews of Muslim educational progress were given.⁹

All these measures were, no doubt, helpful in the spread of English education among the Muslims; but they did not go far enough. As the Quinquennium Report (for 1902-7) pointed out:

The improvements which are taking place in Muhammadan education are doubtless due, in some degree, to the special measures taken by Government to provide and assist in the provision of suitable facilities, but they are due even more to the general change which is taking place in the feeling of the Muhammadan community towards education.¹⁰

There were many factors which contributed to this change, but among them pride of place must be given to the efforts of men like Sir Syed Ahmed in the North-Western Provinces; Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali in Bengal; Badruddin Tyabjee and Abdullah Dharamsi in Bombay; Husain Ali Effendi in Sind; and the founders of the Anjumane-Himayet ul-Islam in the Punjab. It was because of these men that institutions like the M.A.O. College at Aligarh, the Anjuman-e-Islam School at Bombay, the Islamia College at Lahore, the Sindh Madrasatul-Islam at Karachi¹¹ and the Calcutta Madrasah¹² flourished and gave an impetus to the rise of similar institutions in other parts of India.

But the main lever to bring about this change in Muslim

⁹ See Sir Alfred Croft's *Review of Education in India, with special reference to the Report of the Education Commission*, 316-22.

¹⁰ See *Progress of Education in India (1902-1907): Fifth Quinquennial Review*, I, 282.

¹¹ For a short account of its rise and progress see an editorial in the *Moslem Chronicle*, April 4, 1896.

¹² See editorials in the *Moslem Chronicle* of March 1 and 8, 1902, and October 31 and November 31, 1903.

outlook was the M.A.O. College; no other institution came anywhere near it in that task. Hence its story must needs be told in some details; its foundation proved a landmark in the annals of Muslim education. Moreover, its leaders and students soon began to shape even the political future of their co-religionists. In fact, within less than a decade, its luminaries, collectively described as the "Aligarh School"¹³ assumed an almost monopolistic control of Muslim affairs. From them went the word to the newly educated Muslims and in nine cases out of ten they respected that word; in consequence, for more than two decades, Aligarh turned out to be the focal point of Muslim activities, educational, social and political.

The circumstances that led to the foundation of the M.A.O. College at Aligarh have been described by Sir Syed himself in a long letter to the Director of Public Instructions, N.W.P. In it he explains how the inquiries of some influential Muslims into the causes of Muslim backwardness "roused the most serious apprehension in regard to the future of their co-religionists under the British rule" and "how they formed themselves into a Committee to raise funds for establishing the present College."¹⁴ Originally they wanted to confine the College to Muslims only but "so much good will, sympathy and generosity was displayed by the Hindu nobility and gentry" that it was decided to keep the doors open to the Hindus as well.¹⁵

The Committee began its work of collecting funds and enrolling the support of influential Muslims early in 1872; by 1873 it was able to open an English-medium School under the Headmastership of an Englishman, L.G.I. Siddons, who later became

¹³ See an editorial, "Reflections on the Aligarh Movement", in the *Moslem Chronicle*, July 30, 1898.

¹⁴ Quoted by Syed Mahmud in his *History of English Education in India*, 163-64.

¹⁵ However the emphasis from the beginning was on Anglo-Muslim friendship to the exclusion of the Hindus. As Sir Syed explained in his Address to Sir Auckland Colvin during the latter's visit to the College on March 10, 1888: "The desire of our hearts is that the Crescent and the Cross being united should shed their light over India. You see it typified in that old torn banner which hangs in this hall, and which was hung in this College at the time of its foundation. We hope that our students will treasure this emblem in their hearts and will never forget it."

the first Principal of the M.A.O. College. On January 8, 1877, Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, laid the foundation stone of the College building. In their address of welcome to His Excellency, the Committee, after expressing their belief that "the British rule in India is the most wonderful phenomenon the world has ever seen", thus described the aims and objects of the institution:

To make these facts [regarding the blessings of the British rule] clear to the minds of our countrymen; to educate them so that they may be able to appreciate these blessings; dispel those illusory traditions of the past which have hindered our progress; to remove those prejudices which have hitherto exercised a baneful influence on our race; to reconcile oriental learning with Western literature and science; to inspire in the dreamy minds of the people of the East the practical energy which belongs to those of the West; to make the Musalmans of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown; to inspire in them that loyalty which springs not from servile submission to a foreign rule, but from genuine appreciation of the blessings of good government; these are the objects which the founders of the College have prominently in view.¹⁶

In his reply, Lytton described the occasion as constituting "an epoch in the social progress of India under the British rule" and expressed his rejoicing at being able to take part in it. He also welcomed the establishment of the M.A.O. College for "one special reason". "There is no object", he said, "which the Government of India has more closely at heart than that the plain principles of its rule should be thoroughly intelligible to all its subjects, from the highest to the humblest". This, he was convinced, could be achieved better by "a body of cultivated natives . . . than twice the number of English officials or twenty times the number of European scholars."¹⁷

Lytton promised to pay to the College funds from his own purse Rs. 500 every month. Prominent among other donors were the Nizam, the Maharajas of Patiala, Banaras and Vizianagram,

¹⁶ See the Supplement to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, January 12, 1877.

¹⁷ *The Pioneer*, January 11, 1877.

the Nawab of Rampur, Sir Salar Jung, Lord Northbrook, Sir William Muir, Sir John Strachey and Sir William Hunter.

However, from the Muslim public Sir Syed and his band of followers, whom he had gathered around him, had to face much opposition. They were subjected not only to ridicule and satire but also to threats, especially by the Ulama, who carried on a vigorous propaganda against the College and damned it in *khutabas* and *fatuwas*, as anti-Islamic.¹⁸ But in 1886 the tide of public opinion began to turn; many Muslims openly expressed their sympathy with the College. There were also other causes which helped the progress of the institution. One of them, according to Morison, was "certainly political".¹⁹ Sir Syed's anti-Congress speeches not only brought him the support of many bureaucrats; they also helped to bring round within his fold the Muslim zamindars and taluqdars, who were anxious to have some medium to express their loyalty to the British.

Furthermore, the anti-cow-killing agitation, started by the Hindus in many important cities and towns, created a sense of uneasiness among the Muslims; they felt that without English education they would be reduced to an inferior position. Besides, this Hindu agitation also led them to look for religious affinities with the British. And hence "the whole tendency of the time" comments Morison, "was to bring the Muhammadans and the English together." To try and bring this about Sir Syed worked hard.²⁰

Besides, the academic progress of the College was equally heartening for its founder. In 1891, there were 310 students; by 1895 the number had risen to 565. As Beck revealed in one of his Annual Reports:

The University results have been good; the food arrangements have been improved; attendance at prayers has been made more regular; a Riding School has been established;

¹⁸ See *Tarikh-i-Madrasat-al 'Uloom-i-Musalmanan* (Urdu text), 90-92.

¹⁹ See Theodore Morison's *History of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh, from its foundation to the year 1903*, 10.

²⁰ Ibid.

regular drill has been instituted and the College Magazine has been put on a sound footing.²¹

However, in 1896, a considerable part of the College Funds was embezzled by its Hindu Head Clerk; this shook public confidence in the management. The incident had a terrible effect on Sir Syed; it also caused a fall in the number of students. Moreover, right at this time, Government doubled the College fees. All this resulted in the temporary arrest of the growth of Collegiate education among the Muslims. The number of Muslim students at Aligarh fell from 565 in 1895 to 343 in 1898.²²

On March 27, 1898, Sir Syed died. Everything in the College had revolved so much round his person that it was feared generally that, with his death, the institution might collapse. However, Beck and Mohsinul Mulk worked for it with single-minded devotion, with the result that they were able to maintain its progress. But in the following year Beck also died. This was, indeed, another grievous blow to the institution.²³ Morison stepped into Beck's shoes and took up the challenge. He was able to tide over the difficulties. He remained the Principal till 1905 when his place was taken by another Englishman, W. A. J. Archbold. Because of the influence that these three Principals exerted on the rising Muslim generation, which came under their care, their role in Muslim politics was quite significant. Besides, every one of them took an active interest in Indian political controversies and on not a few occasions were able to

²¹ See the Annual Report of the M.A.O. College for 1894-95. Also according to the *General Report on Public Instruction in the N.W.P. and Oudh* (1894-95), "the numbers in the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, show continued and rapid growth." (p. 11)

²² See *General Report on Public Instruction in the N.W.P. and Oudh* (1896-97), 26; also for the year 1898-99, 18.

²³ However, according to the report of Morison for the academic year 1899-1900, the M.A.O. College was "materially . . . this year stronger than it has ever been before, nor have there ever been so many Muhammadan students within its walls. Morally it is gaining in the esteem of the Musalman community; widening circles; and as some of the asperities of theological controversy have been softened; it is growing day by day more truly the hope and pride of the Musalmans of Northern India." Quoted in *Ibid* (1899-1900), 20.

guide the Muslim leadership at Aligarh in the particular channels that they wanted.

By 1900 the M.A.O. College at Aligarh had acquired an all-India reputation. Students came to it not only from every Indian province but also from as far East as Burma and Singapore;²⁴ it also sent candidates for various examinations to all the five Universities then functioning in India. The following table gives an idea of the part played by the M.A.O. College in Muslim education during the period under review (the figures refer to the Muslim graduates in India):

<i>Years</i>	<i>Calcutta</i>	<i>Madras</i>	<i>Bombay</i>	<i>Punjab</i>	<i>Allahabad</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Aligarh</i>
1882-87	80	12	7	11	—	110	10
1888-92	90	9	7	44	53	203	17
1893-97	107	31	18	77	165	398	77
1898-1902	121	18	24	123	192	478	116

In the analysis of these figures we find that while in 1882 the percentage of Aligarh graduates to the total number of Muslim graduates in India was only 9.09 per cent, in 1902 it had risen to more than 27 per cent; the increase was nearly treble.

However, the M.A.O. College was not so much an academic centre as a training ground for many other activities. Beck and Morison always looked down upon the "babu craze" for passing examinations; their emphasis was on, what they called, "the development of character".²⁵ They did not believe in

²⁴ See Appendix C to the Annual Report of the M.A.O. College for 1902-1903. Also see the *General Report on Public Instruction in the N.W.P. and Oudh* (1901-1902), 12.

²⁵ At the end of our period the relative position of Muslims in N.W.P. was thus summarised in a Government publication: "The increase in the number of Hindu scholars during the quinquennium is 132,698, whilst the Muhammadans have increased by 19,595. Thus the Hindus have increased by 37 per cent, the Muhammadans by only 21 per cent. Comparatively speaking, therefore, the latter community has lost ground, just as it did during the preceding five years. In 1901-02 Muhammadans formed 20.7 per cent of the pupils, they now form only 18.7. But there is one satisfactory feature of the statistics, and that is that the number of Muhammadans reading in colleges has nearly doubled, having risen from 460 to 802. Of these, however, nearly half are at Aligarh, which draws a num-

producing clerks and petty officers; their ambition was to train Muslim boys on English public school lines, so that they might be able to preserve their sense of social pride.²⁶ For this purpose dozens of societies and clubs were started: the Siddon's Club, for the development of elocution and debating talents; the College Union for training boys in the parliamentary system; the *Akhwan-us-Safa* for the maintenance of Islamic traditions; the *Anjuman-al Farz* for the cultivation of a sense of duty towards the community. All these organisations were run by the students but in the background stood Beck, Morison or some English professor, who not only directed their activities but rarely let go an opportunity to impress upon the impressionable Muslim youth the benefits of loyalty to the Raj and of trust in British sincerity. Moreover, anti-Hindu sentiments were often encouraged. When J. C. Chakervati joined the College as a professor of mathematics this feeling was so prevalent that Morison had to admit in one of his Reports that it was too much to hope "that remarks were not occasionally dropped which must have been painful to him".²⁷

The social trends at Aligarh were definitely sectarian and loyalist; hence the outlook of students could not but be influenced by them. Beck, for instance, had little regard for educational attainments; he was more interested in producing good and loyal subjects for Her Majesty. In consequence, he condemned the whole approach of the Indian Universities, which were fast developing into centres of "native" rebels, and characterised them as "a political evil of the first magnitude". "It tends", he explained, "to alienate in sympathy the rulers and the ruled. It has notoriously failed to produce scholars; it makes no pretence to turn out gentlemen; nor does it attempt to implant qualities of energy, public spirit and manliness." He was mainly interested at Aligarh in bringing the Muslims nearer

her of its students from outside these provinces."—*General Report of Public Instruction in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (1907), 61.

²⁶ See *Tarikh-i-Madrasat 'Ulum-i-Musalman* (Urdu text), 274-97.

²⁷ Theodore Morison's *History of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh from its foundation to the year 1903*, II.

to the English so that they might be kept away from the "rebellious" Hindus.²⁸

After Beck's death, Morison followed his policy with the same earnestness and enthusiasm. Being a more amiable person than Beck, he was a greater success. The anti-cow-killing agitation of the Hindus provided him with a good handle to work for Anglo-Muslim alliance. That agitation, he convinced his Muslim colleagues, was as much against the British as the Muslims because both were beef-eaters.

How powerful was the influence of the English professors at Aligarh was seen when they forced the removal of Samiulla Khan, one of the closest friends of Sir Syed, as a trustee. Samiulla Khan did not like the domination of the English professors over every activity of the College; in particular he resented their interference in matters of policy. Besides, he was against the huge salaries that they drew, especially in view of the fact that the College was hardly able to make ends meet. Gradually Beck and his colleagues built up opposition against Samiulla Khan in the Board of Management and, by 1889, were able to persuade Sir Syed to appoint his son, Syed Mahmud, as a Joint Secretary of the College Committee. This measure was pressed by them because they feared that, after the Syed's death, if no statutory provision was made, Samiulla Khan, being the oldest and the most trusted and active worker in the College, might become its Secretary. This was too cruel a blow for Samiulla Khan to bear and, consequently, he and his friends withdrew from the affairs of the College and devoted themselves to the establishment of a Muslim Hostel at Allahabad.²⁹

However, apart from the College, Sir Syed had also founded, in December 1886, a Muhammadan Educational Congress, which soon became the centre of his public activities. Probably he got the idea from the Indian National Congress which was founded by prominent Hindu, Parsi and European leaders in Bombay only a year previously. But unlike the latter, in

²⁸ See the Annual Report of the M.A.O. College (1897-8). Also see strong criticism of Beck's views in the *Pioneer*, July 29, 1898, under the heading "An Educational Bombshell".

²⁹ See Hali, *Hayat-e-Javed* (Urdu text), Part I, 281.

his Congress no political discussion was allowed. Sir Syed made that plain at the very first session of the Muhammadan Educational Congress held during Christmas week, 1886, at Aligarh. This session was attended by 87 delegates and was presided over by Samiulla Khan.

"Gentlemen", said Sir Syed, addressing the delegates, "I don't agree with those people who think that without political discussion there can be no national progress. On the contrary, I hold that education, and education alone, can be the means of national regeneration. Therefore at this time we should not strive for anything except the spread of education among our community."³⁰

The Congress, therefore, devoted all its sessions to finding ways and means by which this object could best be achieved. For his part, Sir Syed was convinced that, the more the M.A.O. College was helped, the greater would be the progress of education among the Muslims.³¹

The second session of the Educational Congress was held during the last week of December, 1887, at Lucknow. It was presided over by one of the most influential Oudh Taluqdars, Munshi Muhammad Imtiaz Ali Khan, and was attended by 130 delegates. However, it was not so much the proceedings of this Congress as the anti Indian National Congress speeches delivered by Sir Syed immediately afterwards at Lucknow and Meerut, which attracted countrywide attention. Though he made no use of the Muhammadan Educational Congress for this political purpose, thus upholding its non-political character, most of the delegates to the Lucknow session were present at his anti-Congress lectures.

The third session of the Muhammadan Educational Congress was a much greater success. It was held on 29, 30 and 31 December, 1888, at Lahore and was attended by 258 delegates drawn from important centres of North India and by some hundreds of visitors. The Lt.-Governor had lent the large durbar tent for

³⁰ *Khulasai Karwai-e-Yazdeh Saleh* (Proceedings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1896) compiled by Mehdi Ali Khan (Urdu text), 5.

³¹ See his speech on the subject at the second session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference in the *Pioneer*, December 29 and 30, 1887.

the meeting, which was presided over by Sirdar Muhammad Hyat Khan, the District Judge of Guzarat. Among the resolutions adopted at this Congress were (1) a resolution welcoming the Government of India's Resolution of July 15, 1885; (2) a resolution urging the collection of funds for poor students; and (3) a resolution appealing to the Muslims to curtail their marriage and funeral expenses.³² In order to carry out these resolutions effectively it was decided to form District and Provincial Standing Committees of the Congress throughout India.

The Indian National Congress also held their annual gathering at the same time in Allahabad; and this is how a Special Correspondent of the *Pioneer* described the "contrasts" between the two Congresses:

The one flying the banner of magnificent political projects, lecturing the rulers of the country on their shortcomings and boasting of their own capacity; the other bent on education, on setting right the affairs within the house, lamenting the falling off of their people in learning and elaborating schemes of self-sacrifice and self-help. From the Muhammadan standpoint the contrast is far more striking. The one proposed to represent the Muhammadan community; the other represented it. In the former a desperate effort was made by outsiders to drag or tempt in every Musalman, illiteracy or insignificance being regarded as no disqualification; in the other the cultured leaders of the community spontaneously came forward, men representing the backbone of the community, its real leaders and those who have a right to speak in the name of the Muhammadans of Upper India.³³

At the fourth session of the Muhammadan Educational Congress held at Aligarh in 1889, from December 27 to 30, one

³² See *Majmu'a-e-Resolutionhai Deh Saleh* (Resolutions passed at the annual meetings of the Muhammadan Education Conference from 1886 to 1895, Urdu text), 18-27. Also, for a report of the proceedings of this session, see the *Civil and Military Gazette*, December 28 and 31, 1888.

³³ *The Pioneer*, January 4, 1889. Also see for a fuller report of this session and text of resolutions passed and the names, occupations and places of residence of the delegates, Khairud-din Shaikh's *The Third Muhammadan Educational Congress* (Lahore, 1889).

particular resolution roused the delegates to almost a fever pitch; it dealt with the introduction in certain schools of some books considered objectionable from the Islamic point of view. The meeting called upon the educational authorities to withdraw these books and further not to prescribe in future any book which even in the slightest degree disparaged Islam or its Prophet, Muhammad.³⁴

However, the most interesting feature of this Congress was a debate organised by the M.A.O. College Debating Society in which the delegates participated. The proposition was "That this house is of the opinion that the fall of the Mugal Empire was due more to Akbar's than Aurangzeb's policy". Fiery speeches were made on the occasion, particularly in denouncing Akbar, while even a mild attack on Aurangzeb was resented by the audience. When the proposition was put to vote, it was carried by 119 votes to 36.³⁵

The fifth session of the Congress (the name was changed at this session to Muhammadan Educational Conference, by which name it will be referred henceforth) was held at Allahabad during Christmas week of 1890 and was attended by about a thousand delegates. It met soon after the Allahabad University had decided to exclude Persian as one of the classical languages from its curricula. Sir Syed protested most vehemently against this measure and attributed its adoption to the predominantly Hindu composition of the Senate. He called it "the first attack on the education of the Muslims by Hindus". A resolution to this effect was adopted.³⁶

Speaking on another resolution, Sir Syed opposed the introduction of technical education in Indian Universities. He was supported by Beck, who impressed upon the delegates that the aim of education was not technical training but the study of learning and the development of the human mind. In con-

³⁴ For text of the resolution see *Majmu'a-e-Resolutionhai Deh Saleh* (Resolutions passed at the annual meeting of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1895, Urdu text), 32. For a report of the proceedings of this session see the *Pioneer*, January 6, 1890.

³⁵ For an account of the proceedings of the debate see the *M.A.O. College Magazine*, January 1890.

³⁶ *The Pioneer*, December 30, 1891.

sequence the Conference unanimously urged upon the authorities that "technical education should not be introduced into the Universities and that no change should be made in the course of literary studies."³⁷

The sixth session of the Conference met during the last week of December in 1891 at Aligarh under the presidentship of Nawab Muhammad Ishaq Khan. It was attended by 449 delegates and about 30 visitors. Most of the discussion was on familiar lines and no new resolution of any great significance was adopted.

More or less the same thing happened at the seventh session (held during the same time as the previous year) which was presided over by Maulvi Mohammad Hashmat-ullah. The number of delegates was 613 and there were 128 visitors. Delhi was the venue and it attracted many leading Muslims of North India. Resolutions were passed urging the preservation of "the ancient arts of the Muslims" and the imparting of religious education in schools.

A resolution was also unanimously adopted by the Conference dealing with the activities of Muslim students in Britain. The mover was Sir Syed himself. The resolution read:

That this Conference has in several meetings approved of students going to England for education and has considered it a means of national improvement; hence it is necessary for it to express the opinion that this Conference does not approve of students going to England for study and marrying women of other nationalities.³⁸

The eighth session of the Conference was held at Aligarh during the last week of December, 1893. It was presided over by Mohsinul Mulk and was attended by 672 delegates and 118

³⁷ *Majmu'a-e-Resolutionhai Deh Saleh* (Resolutions passed at the annual meetings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1895, Urdu text), 37. To his last days Sir Syed opposed the introduction of technical education among the Muslims. See Hali's *Hayat-e-Javeed* (Urdu text), 105-07 (Part I). Also see Beck's letter on technical education to the *Pioneer*, January 7, 1891.

³⁸ *Majmu'a-e-Resolutionhai Deh Saleh* (Resolutions passed at the annual meetings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1895, Urdu text), 48. Also see the *Pioneer*, January 1, 1894.

visitors, mostly from the United Provinces and the Punjab. Nothing of importance took place excepting that the gathering resolved to found some scholarships for encouraging Muslim students in Government Schools and Colleges to take Arabic as a second language.³⁹

For the ninth session the venue was again Aligarh and, as usual, the meeting took place at the end of the year (1894). Muhammad Shah Din, a leading barrister from the Punjab, presided and there were about 400 delegates. Despite repeated emphasis on the spread of English education, the Conference was constrained to note that little progress was noticeable in that direction. Hence it urged the Muslims, particularly the well-to-do, to earmark for the next twenty years some money or property for the furtherance of English education among the Muslims. Unless proper means were provided, the Conference felt, no tangible results could be obtained.⁴⁰

The tenth session of the Conference was held at Shahjehanpur in the United Provinces during Christmas week of 1895. Mohsinul Mulk was, once again, elected the President. In his address the Nawab emphasised that Islam was not inimical to any culture or civilisation. To oppose English education because it might subvert Islam, he said, was to admit that Islam was only meant for the primitive and ignorant races.⁴¹

The name of the organisation was again slightly altered; the words "Anglo-Oriental" were added to it. As amended, the name read: The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference. No reasons were given but perhaps the change was made in order to emphasise the close relationship between the two institutions, the Conference and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College.⁴²

Of the many resolutions that were adopted at this session, one called upon the educated Muslims to undertake in their

³⁹ *The Pioneer*, January 1, 1894.

⁴⁰ See *Musalmanonki Kismat Ka Faisla* (Urdu text).

⁴¹ *The Pioneer*, December 31, 1895.

⁴² See *Khulasai-Karwai-e Yazdah Saleh* (Proceedings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1896) compiled by Mehdi Ali Khan (Urdu text), 17.

spare time the job of translating English works into Urdu so that their "unfortunate brethren", not acquainted with English, might be able to appreciate "the wealth of knowledge" that the English possessed.⁴³

The eleventh session of the Conference held at Meerut from 27 to 30 December, 1896, devoted much of its time to its reorganisation, particularly in regard to the agenda and finances of the annual sessions and the setting up of local Standing Committees to give effect to the resolutions passed by the various Annual Conferences.⁴⁴ The deliberations were of a routine nature except for the furore created when some of the delegates protested against what they called the "authoritative tone" of Sir Syed and his "high-handedness".⁴⁵

After the heat on either side subsided, Beck and Morison suggested changes in the rules and regulations of the Conference to streamline its activities. However, the most significant feature of this Conference was the brilliant Presidential Address delivered by the famous Orientalist, Syed Husain Bilgrami; but it was more a literary treat than a practical discourse.⁴⁶

Because of Sir Syed's serious illness, which later cost him his life, there was no gathering the following year. In consequence, the next session, the twelfth, met at Lahore during Christmas week of 1898 under the shadow of his death. Perhaps to mark their appreciation of the work done by their late leader the Conference was attended by well over a thousand delegates and some hundreds of visitors. It was presided over by one of the premier landlords of North India, Nawab Fateh Ali Khan Qizilbash. The enthusiasm among the Muslim inhabitants of the city was so great that, according to a press report, "guests [on their arrival] were greeted with loud cheering; and flowers were showered upon them and outside the station the enthu-

⁴³ For full text of the resolution see *Majmu'a-e-Resolutionhai Deh Saleh* (Urdu text).

⁴⁴ See Report of the Tenth Meeting of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference (Urdu text).

⁴⁵ See the *Pioneer*, January 2, 1897.

⁴⁶ For a full report of this meeting and the speeches made there see the *Moslem Chronicle* of January 15 and February 6, 1897.

siasm reached such height that the horses were drawn out and the guests were drawn by large crowd to their lodgings."⁴⁷

Perhaps the most important resolution ever adopted by the Conference was moved at this session. The mover was Theodore Morison and the subject: The establishment of a Muslim University in India. In seconding this resolution, Shah Din, made some significant remarks. "We are a religious not a territorial community", he said. "We are brothers not because we live in one country or under one Government but because we worship one God and follow one Prophet. Let it be the glory and the privilege of the Muslims in India to be the leaders of a great intellectual revival among the Muhammadans of the whole world."⁴⁸

Another significant pronouncement was made by Beck. Speaking about the work and the future of the Conference—this had to be emphasised because of Sir Syed's death—he said:

The Muhammadan Conference is not merely a technical body; it is also a patriotic and political organisation. It aims at the fostering of a spirit of loyalty among the Muslims towards their beloved Queen and at upholding the principle of brotherhood between Englishmen and Muhammadans.⁴⁹

After Sir Syed's death Mohsinul Mulk became the General Secretary of the Conference. Unlike his chief, the latter did not limit the holding of its annual gatherings to places near Aligarh. He widened its scope and increased its strength by attracting within its fold Muslims from all over India. Perceiving its great potentialities as a centre of Muslim activities, he decided that its meetings should be held, from year to year, in the important cities of India. In consequence, the thirteenth session of the Conference was held during the Christmas week of 1899 in Calcutta. As the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Conference claimed, it was "the first time that the Muhammadans of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa"

⁴⁷ *The Pioneer*, December 31, 1898. Also see the *Civil and Military Gazette*, January 1, 1899.

⁴⁸ *The Moslem Chronicle*, February 4, 1899 (Supplement).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

had been given an opportunity to meet in a national conference.⁵⁰ The idea was welcomed by even the Lt.-Governor of the province⁵¹ while the Muslim inhabitants of the city filled "every balcony and every window" that proved handy to have "a glimpse" of the impressive procession of delegates as it passed by.⁵²

In his opening address, Shah Din urged, particularly upon the Muslims of Bengal and Bihar, one special point, i.e. the relationship between the M.A.O. College and the Muhammadan Educational Conference. "They are, both of them," he said, "products of the same mind and have been moulded into shape by the same skilful hands. For many purposes each is, and must remain, identified with the other, and yet the aims cannot be said to be identical." He then explained the broad national character of the Conference as compared with the scope of the College which was necessarily limited to the particular kind of education given within its portals, while the former "is open to all comers, receives suggestions from all quarters, discusses proposals of all kinds." However, for the moral and intellectual advancement of the Muslims both were essential; one could not progress without the other.⁵³

In his Presidential Address, Ameer Ali made many practical suggestions for the spreading of English education among the Muslims. He laid special stress on the establishment of "an Anglo-Oriental Muhammadan School . . . for each district or group of districts to act as feeders to the Central College in the North West." He also urged upon his co-religionists to strive for the validation and proper management of *wakfs*; and the imparting of an education "which would combine the best European method with the right Islamic training." He also emphasised the value of female education and the role that the Muslim youth could play in bringing about an Islamic revival in India.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See *Progress of Education in India: Fourth Quinquennial Review* (1897-98 to 1901-20), 381-82.

⁵¹ *The Moslem Chronicle*, December 29, 1899.

⁵² *Ibid.*, December 29, 30 and 31, 1899.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ For full text of Ameer Ali's address see the *M.A.O. College Magazine*, January 15, 1900. For resolutions and the speeches made at the session

The Conference passed many resolutions, some of them dealing with the special need of Bengali Muslims. For instance, considerable time was devoted to a discussion of the Mohsin Endowment and the Anglo-Persian Department of the Calcutta Madrasah. But the most important resolution was the one by which the Conference reiterated its demand for the establishment of a Muslim University, appealed for funds to make it a reality, and expressed its belief that it could best be brought about by turning the M.A.O. College into a University. "There the climate is salubrious", said Nawab Ali Chawdhary, "living is very cheap, and around it lie the historical piles of Muhammadan glory and civilisation in India." He also pointed out that they could not select "a better site" than Aligarh because "the very bricks of its buildings have been sanctified by the touch of the greatest and noblest human being that ever breathed on this earth."⁵⁵

By another resolution it was decided that "within three years from January 1, 1900" schools for girls "consistent with the tenets of Islam and the traditions of high Muhammadan families be started in the capital of every province". Shaukat Ali, who later came to be known in Indian politics as the "Big Brother", made an interesting speech in favour of the resolution and urged upon Muslims that they could never make any progress if their "better-halves" were kept in ignorance. There were also other young delegates, such as Ali Imam from Bihar and Aftab Ahmed Khan, who shone at this Conference and later played a prominent role in Muslim politics.

Encouraged by the success of the Calcutta experiment, Mohsinul Mulk decided to hold the fourteenth session of the Conference in Patna, the capital of Bihar. All arrangements were completed when, at the last moment, plague broke out in the city and therefore the Conference had to be held in Rampur, where its ruler entertained the delegates on a lavish scale.

In more ways than one this session of the Conference proved

see the *Statesman* (Weekly Edition), January 4, 1900, and for the text of the President's Urdu speech on the last day of the session see the *Moslem Chronicle*, January 13, 1900.

⁵⁵ *The Moslem Chronicle*, December 30, 1899.

a landmark in the annals of Muslim education. It not only reversed some former decisions, as being both archaic and anachronistic in character, but also passed many resolutions in accordance with the spirit of the times. For instance, it underlined the necessity of technical training for Muslim boys and of the study of law and engineering. It also took a firm stand on the question of female education and demanded the extension of the boarding house system in secondary schools.

Moreover, its President, Syed Husain Bilgrami, tried to give a new orientation to Muslim education by placing before the delegates new aims and ideals. "When the Mughals ruled India," he reminded them, "both Hindus and Muslims took great pains to acquire an elegant Persian style and some even went as far as to learn the Chagtai Turkish. Those who sought to be reckoned learned went to the centres of Arabic learning and spent years in the acquisition of Theology, Grammar, Logic, Physics and Metaphysics of our School. Now, however, a complete change has come over the spirit of the time. The art of the rhymster, of the calligraphist has ceased to be remunerative; the physics of Aristotle and Avicenna is antiquated; the *Al-mayisat* of Tusi is useless; the algebra of Khyam has lost its value; the chemistry of Jabir is mere jugglery; the Metaphysics of Averroes is of no use; and the Platonism of Farabi is of little account."⁵⁶ Therefore the President appealed to the Muslims not to waste any more time in the study of these subjects and to plunge into the learning of the new ideas which were being brought from the West. Rarely before was such an uncompromising stand taken by a responsible leader before a representative Muslim gathering.

Mohsinul Mulk continued to work hard, widening the scope of the Conference and making it known throughout the country. He decided to hold its next session, the fifteenth, as far south as in Madras. Friends warned him against his decision, saying that the Madrasi Muslims had little in common with their co-religionists of North India, but he remained firm. There was also some local opposition in Madras and the length of the

⁵⁶ *The Pioneer*, January 5, 1901.

journey made it impossible for a large contingent of delegates to attend from North India. But despite all these obstacles, and largely due to the exertions of the Reception Committee, the session was a great success and attracted no less than 2000 delegates and visitors.⁵⁷ Moreover, Mohsinul Mulk, by his personal charm and eloquence, was able to turn many a local Muslim leader into an enthusiastic supporter of the Aligarh movement, and succeeded in persuading the Muslims of South India to take to the learning of Hindustani.⁵⁸ This time, the President of the Conference was not a Muslim but Mr. Justice Bodhem, an English Judge of the Madras High Court.

The reasons for this "innovation" were given by the President himself in his address to the delegates. "Unfortunately," he said, "the Musalman community in the Presidency is without acknowledged leaders. It has no organisation or cohesion. It is split up into small bodies without any definite national aims or objects and it has been found impossible to select from your community in Madras anyone who has the necessary qualities and enjoys the general confidence of his community to act as President—owing principally to the suspicion, jealousy and ignorance of a large part of the community."⁵⁹

There is no doubt that the efforts of Mohsinul Mulk did create a sense of solidarity among the Muslims of South India and goaded them into action. Again, as a result of this Conference the Local Government became more interested in the English education of its Muslim subjects and in removing some of their legitimate grievances. To the Muslim leaders of Aligarh, the holding of this session in Madras proved a notable success. As the *Moslem Chronicle* commented: "The Madras Conference reveals . . . that the Aligarh movement is no longer confined . . . to particular cities, towns or districts . . . but that it promises in the fullness of time to sweep all India and to galvanise the Musalman community into one great active

⁵⁷ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 4, 1902.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, January 11, 1902.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, January 25, 1902 (Supplement). For detailed reports of the various sittings of the session, see the *Madras Times*, December 28, 29, 30 and 31, 1901.

force"⁶⁰ Whether it could do this or not, the Madras session popularised the Muhammadan Educational Conference among educated Muslims from the North to the extreme South.

Then came the Great Durbar of 1902; it was organised by Curzon most lavishly, in all its Oriental pomp and grandeur. To him, it symbolised the might and glory of British imperialism in India. The Muslim leaders of Aligarh could not remain unaffected by this occasion. In fact, to mark their solidarity with it, they held the next session, the sixteenth, of the Conference in Delhi at the same time. H. H. the Aga Khan was chosen to preside over it and among those who "graced" the Conference by their presence were the Governor of Bombay, the Lt.-Governor of the United Provinces and Sir David Kar, Resident in the State of Hyderabad. Lord Kitchener not only attended the deliberations of the Conference for some time but also made a short speech in which he assured the delegates that he would always take "a cordial interest" in the education and welfare of Muslims in India.⁶¹

In a highly eloquent speech, full of emotional references to the historic role of Islam and its glorious achievements in the past, the Aga Khan pleaded for the immediate establishment of a Muslim University and appealed to the Muslims to raise at least one crore of rupees for the purpose. "Gentlemen", he asked

⁶⁰ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 25, 1902. However, as against this, the following comments by an Anglo-Indian newspaper are also worthy of notice: "The tradition of having once been rulers of this country does not appeal with the same force to the Muhammadans of Western or Southern India as it does to their co-religionists of the Punjab or the North Western Provinces. The Gujarati-speaking Bohras and Khojas and the Tamil-speaking Lubbais of Southern India are amongst the keenest of traders to whom the problem of life presents itself in quite a different aspect than it does to the stalwart Hindustani, whose sonorous and somewhat long-winded eloquence finds its natural outlet in stately Urdu. The prospect of getting high appointments in the public service does not constitute an equally potent motive with the former as with the latter. Then, again, these enterprising communities of what may be called indigenous Muhammadans, possessing as they do greater affinities with their Hindu neighbours than with their co-religionists of Hindustan, have no objection to their children being educated in institutions open to members of other communities." *Times of India* (Mail Edition), January 12, 1902.

⁶¹ See the *Statesman* (Weekly), January 8, 1903.

the delegates, "do you think that the restoration of the glory of Islam would be too dear at one crore of rupees?", and added, "If you really care for that noble faith which you all profess, you can afford the price."⁶²

However, the Universities Commission, which went into the Muslim claim for a University, did not approve of it in principle. On the contrary, it urged the Government to maintain the "undenominational character of the Universities".⁶³ The Muslim leaders were naturally upset; they feared that, as a result of this recommendation, Curzon might cold-shoulder their demand. But in the Anglo-Indian press, particularly in the *Pioneer*, they found ardent supporters of their claim. "Would Universities in England," asked the Anglo-Indian organ, "have succeeded in establishing themselves, in acquiring wealth and in gathering the learned about them if they had been altogether distinct from religion?" "Assuredly not", replied the *Pioneer*, adding "and the England of those days had much in common with the India of today."⁶⁴

Over the seventeenth session of the Conference, held in Bombay in the last week of December 1903, Badruddin Tyabjee was invited to preside. He had been a President of the Indian National Congress and always advocated Hindu-Muslim co-operation. His election, therefore, assumed a certain significance. Though not indicative of any change in policy, it did reflect a less hostile attitude on the part of the Conference leadership towards the Congress. Besides, Tyabjee did not hesitate to emphasise his approach in the Presidential Address:

In younger and freer days, when not trammelled with the responsibilities of the present office,⁶⁵ I deemed it my duty to support the Congress and was the President of the Congress held in Madras. Now, however, when the position of the

⁶² For full text of the address see the *Pioneer*, January 8, 1903. Also see an editorial on the Aga Khan's address in the *Times of India* (Mail Edition), January 17, 1903, and the *Statesman* (Weekly Edition), January 15, 1903.

⁶³ *Report of the Indian Universities Commission*, 8.

⁶⁴ *The Pioneer*, January 11, 1903. Also see an editorial on the subject in the *Moslem Chronicle*, November 15, 1902.

⁶⁵ Tyabjee was then a judge of the Bombay High Court.

Conference is well defined as an educational and social institution and not a political one, and when there can be no semblance of hostility or antagonism between these institutions, I could accept the honour of presiding here with a perfectly easy conscience.⁶⁶

Further, Tyabjee expressed his hope that in future the two institutions would work hand in hand, one for political advancement and the other in the cause of education. He saw no reason why the Muslims should not work in harmony and peace with other communities. He appealed to the influential members of his community to take an equally active part in the deliberations of the Indian National Congress.

As a result of the Madras and Bombay Conferences, it was found necessary to appoint a sub-committee to amend the constitution so as to bring it in conformity with the changed situation. Also there was much discussion at the Bombay session on female education. Though there was little opposition to its introduction it was generally agreed that in popularising it Muslim usages and customs should be, as far as possible, respected.⁶⁷

That the presidentship of Tyabjee was more a personal honour done to him than a reflection of any fundamental change in the character of the Conference was seen the following year when Theodore Morison, one of the bitterest critics of the Congress, was elected to preside over the eighteenth session of the Conference held at Lucknow on December 27, 28 and 29, 1904. As expected, most of the time of this Conference was taken up in considering ways and means to give reality to its "dream" of turning the M.A.O. College into a University. There was, no doubt, much discussion on the need for technical training and female education among the Muslims, but the chief feature of this Conference was its domination by Muslim princes and landlords who vied with one another in announc-

⁶⁶ For full text of Tyabjee's Presidential Address see the *Times of India* (Mail Edition), January 2, 1904.

⁶⁷ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 2, 1904. Also see an editorial entitled "The Purdah" in the *Moslem Chronicle*, February 6, 1904.

ing liberal donations for the furtherance of English education among their co-religionists.⁶⁸

The following year Aligarh was chosen, once again, as the venue of the nineteenth session of the Conference; it was held there during the last week of December. There was a large attendance of delegates and visitors, many coming from Bombay, Bengal and Madras in order to share the joy at the growth and development of the M.A.O. College. In this session, the Conference again devoted much time to what it called specialised deliberations. It divided itself into different sections which reviewed the year's activities in the particular field allotted to each section.

In this connection, the most valuable work was done by one Shaikh Abdullah, the energetic Secretary of the Female Education Section, who was able to announce that early the following year a Muslim Girls' School⁶⁹ would be opened at Aligarh. For this, he disclosed, the Conference was indebted to the "munificent liberality" of the Begum Saheba of Bhopal and to the "encouragement" given by the Aga Khan and the Nawab of Bahawalpur.⁷⁰ The organisers had also set up a Ladies' Exhibition, which proved a great success.

However the work done by the Social Reform Section, the Literary Section, the Census Section and the Press Section was no less important. Particularly in the Social Reform Section, as a result of the efforts of Khwaja Ghulam-us Saqlain, the urgency of removing many social evils and undesirable practices from among the Muslims was emphasised by the delegates. They promised to organise local campaigns against such evils. A committee of some leading Muslims, representing the various Indian provinces, was set up to consider ways and means by which the M.A.O. College could be turned into a full-fledged University.⁷¹

A significant development took place among the Hindus at

⁶⁸ *The Pioneer*, December 30, 1903. For a fuller report of the Conference see the *Moslem Chronicle*, December 31, 1904, and for the full text of Morison's Presidential Address see the *Educational Review*, January 1905.

⁶⁹ *The Pioneer*, December 31, 1904. ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1906.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, January 5, 1906.

the same time. As this Conference was demanding a Muslim University, some prominent Hindu leaders met and decided to establish a National Hindu University. For this purpose, they organised a mammoth public meeting in the Congress pandal at Calcutta, which was presided over by the veteran Congress leader, Surendranath Banerjea. He explained the importance of such a University in Indian national life, asked for one crore of rupees to bring it about, and declared that both he and Tilak had decided to devote the rest of their lives to the success of this project. To this scheme the *Pioneer* extended its "most cordial encouragement" and hailed it as "a bold conception".⁷²

The twentieth session of the Conference was held during the last three days of December 1906, at Dacca, the capital of the newly-formed province of Eastern Bengal. Upon its deliberations, two political events, fresh in the public mind, seemed to have considerable influence. One struck a sad note; the other brought forth glad tidings. Sadness was expressed upon the resignation of Sir Bampfylde as the Lt.-Governor of the new province; while there was considerable joy among the 3,000 and odd delegates,⁷³ and visitors over the sympathetic reception given by Lord Minto, the new Viceroy, to the "All-India Muhammadan Deputation," which waited upon him the same year on the 1st of October.

The Nawab of Dacca, in full uniform and adorned with his numerous decorations, welcomed the gathering. For him the holding of the Conference in Dacca was a personal triumph. It was as much a reply to the Hindu agitation against him as a proof of his hold upon the Muslims in Eastern Bengal.

In his Presidential Address, Mr. Justice Sharfuddin made prominent mention of the question of a Muslim University in India and said that no matter what their opponents might say the Government was bound to help them in this project because they knew that it was the outcome of the same spirit of loyalty

⁷² Ibid., January 6, 1906. Also see V. G. Bijapurkar's article, "The Need for a Hindu University" in the *Indian Review*, April, 1906.

⁷³ *The Pioneer*, December 30, 1906. Also see the *Bengalee*, December 31, 1906.

which inspired Muslim public life. Turning to other projects, he commended first the need for translating leading European works into Indian languages. He then advocated the formation of local committees to popularise the work of the Conference. As to the desirability of female education, there were, he said, no two opinions. The question was, how to impart it? For his part the President suggested training orphan girls as visiting teachers in *Zenanas*.⁷⁴ Of the many resolutions passed by the Conference one expressed its sense of deep gratitude to Sir B. Fuller for his interest in and help to the cause of Muslim education in Bengal. On the last day of this Conference, Mr. Archbold, the Principal of the M.A.O. College, presided. The theme of his address could be best summed up in one of his own remarks: "India wants social reform rather than political change."⁷⁵

Reviewing the activities of its various sessions for the first two decades of its existence, the Muhammadan Educational Conference, despite its many defects and decidedly narrow outlook, could be said to have helped greatly in popularising English education among Muslims. This was achieved not so much by the many resolutions passed as by the fiery eloquence of scholars like Nazir Ahmed and Mohsinul Mulk and the moving recitations of poets like Hali and Shibli. In fact Nazir Ahmed's lectures, which were always delivered at the fag end of the sessions to prevent the delegates from leaving the gathering prematurely, and Hali's poems, which were literary gems, constituted regular features of every Conference. Besides, in the absence of any political organisation, the Conference also provided for educated Muslims the necessary vehicle for the expression of their new-born zest for some kind of parliamentary activity. As the Aga Khan put it, though rather exaggeratedly:

This Assembly represents all that is best in the Muslim India of today. It expresses an awakening sense of our fallen position after a glorious past; it expresses dissatisfaction with our present intellectual, moral and social position; and it

⁷⁴ *The Statesman* (Weekly Edition), January 3, 1907.

⁷⁵ *The Pioneer*, December 31, 1906.

expresses a long desire to regain the intellectual freedom which we, the Muslims, had attained during the first two centuries of our era.⁷⁶

Perhaps the chief attraction, next to Sir Syed's magnetic personality, was the great stress that the Conference always laid on Islam and its achievements, reviving in the minds of the delegates the great memories of bygone days. Lectures were delivered extolling the virtues of Islam and in moving recitations poets painted graphic pictures of the historic greatness of the Arabian faith. In fact these lectures and recitations became so frequent and long-drawn that they had to be curtailed for finding time for serious discussions.⁷⁷ Besides, at every session, a resolution on religious instruction was adopted without a dissenting voice.⁷⁸ Sometimes there was lamentation that the study of the Quran was not as popular as it ought to be; or that the number of Hafiz was falling.⁷⁹ Muslim students were warned against European authors unfriendly to Islam⁸⁰ while scholars were encouraged to do research work in Islamic history or literature.⁸¹ Finally, books and journals were published to remove misrepresentations against Islam and the Government was urged to make special provision for religious training in schools and colleges.⁸²

But apart from its character and appeal, the Conference did substantial work. "By its means", observed the official recorders of the Indian educational review, "the Muhammadans in widely distant parts of India have been roused to a better appreciation of their duty with regard to the education of their co-

⁷⁶ In his address of welcome to the seventeenth session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference. See the *Times of India* (Mail Edition), January 2, 1904.

⁷⁷ *Khulasai Karwai Yazdeh Saleh* (Proceedings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1896) compiled by Mehdi Ali Khan (Urdu text), 27.

⁷⁸ *Majmu'a-e-Resolutionhai Deh Saleh* (Resolutions passed by the annual meetings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1885 to 1895, Urdu text).

⁷⁹ Ibid., 10-11; 14. ⁸⁰ Ibid., 44-45. ⁸¹ Ibid., 61.

⁸² *Khulasai Karwai Yazdeh Saleh* (Proceedings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1896) compiled by Mehdi Ali Khan (Urdu text), 49-51.

religionists and invaluable work has been accomplished by the dissipation of prejudice and the kindling of a desire for education and improvement."⁸³

However, the scope of both the M.A.O. College and the Muhammadan Educational Conference, was confined mostly to North India; for similar work in other provinces reference must be made to the activities of other institutions. Of these some occupied a prominent place in Muslim life and even a cursory glance at their activities would show the progress in education achieved by the Muslims as a whole during the period under review.

Of these institutions, the Calcutta Madrasa, founded by Warren Hastings, was the oldest; it was run by the Government and worked as two departments; one, the Anglo-Persian department, which taught the students up to the Matriculation standard of the Calcutta University, and two, the Arabic department, with a course of studies extending to eleven years. According to official figures, there were, on March 31, 1907, 42 students in the Madrasa.⁸⁴

Then there was the Islamia College at Lahore run by the Anjumane-Himayetul Islam. It believed in imparting to Muslim youths a liberal English education combined with theological instruction. It also prepared students for the Intermediate, B.A., and M.A. examinations of the Punjab University and paid considerable attention to the learning of Arabic and Persian and the study of Islamic subjects. For instance, in the M.A. classes, only Arabic and Theology were taught. Attached to the College was a school and a hostel with accommodation for about fifty students. The number of students on the rolls in 1907 was 89.⁸⁵

Again a reference must be made to the work done by the Anjumane Islam in Bombay. Though not imparting collegiate

⁸³ *Progress of Education in India, Fourth Quinquennial Review (1897-98 to 1901-02)*, Part I, 382.

⁸⁴ For an account of the Calcutta Madrasa and its activities see *Progress of Education in Bengal: Third Quinquennial Review (1902-03 to 1906-07)*, 153-56.

⁸⁵ See *Report of Public Instruction in the Punjab and its Dependencies (1906-07)*, 13-14.

education, its influence in popularising the study of English among Muslims in Western India was considerable. Besides, it provided a very good medium for leading Muslims in the city to carry on their educational activities. At the end of the period under review the Director of Public Instruction in Bombay was so much impressed by their efforts in this direction that he expressed his belief that the Muslims would soon make a more general and effective use of the schools and colleges in the Presidency.⁸⁶ Similar sentiments were also expressed by Dr. Bourne of Madras who, though by no means satisfied with the progress made by the Muslims in his Presidency, especially in higher education, was able to report that "the signs were improving in one or two of the central and southern districts".⁸⁷

The situation was, therefore, much less unsatisfactory than before, though there were still many difficulties to be overcome before the Muslims could take wholeheartedly to English education. For instance there were the *madrassas* and *maktabs*, flourishing as before, with all their brakes to proper adjustment to modern life and their tendency to widen the gap which separated the Muslims from the other communities. The Director of Public Instruction of the Central Provinces observed that apart from the many obstacles in the way of Muslims there was "the great stress on the teaching of the Quran and religion during the school-going age", which they carried "so far that they object to their children being taught even secular subjects by Hindu teachers".⁸⁸

This was a problem which the Muslim leaders never tackled seriously; in consequence the Muslims were not able to take full advantage of Government and Government-aided institutions. Besides, the education authorities were extra cautious in this matter "lest any violence be done to the conservatism of Muhammadan masses, their religious susceptibilities and their attachment to classical lore".⁸⁹

⁸⁶ See *Progress of Education in the Bombay Presidency* (1902-03 to 1906-07), 61.

⁸⁷ *Report on Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency for 1906-07 and for the Quinquennium 1902-03 to 1906-07*, I, 52.

⁸⁸ *Report on the State and Progress of Education in the Central Provinces and Berar for the Quinquennium ending 1906-07*, I, 35.

⁸⁹ See *Report on the Progress of Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam* (1901-02 to 1906-07), I, 100.

All these factors had considerable influence in checking the progress of English education among the Muslims. Undoubtedly there was improvement all round but not of a very encouraging nature. This is best seen by a study of the figures, given below, of Muslim students in various institutions from 1886 to 1907:

	<i>Arts Colleges</i>	<i>Professional Colleges</i>	<i>Secondary Schools</i>	<i>Primary Schools</i>
1886-87	338 (4.2%)	139 (5.1%)	58,644 (13.7%)	495,680 (19.7%)
1891-92	736 (5.9%)	246 (7.5%)	66,652 (14.0%)	571,035 (20.1%)
1896-97	939 (6.6%)	291 (6.7%)	75,976 (14.2%)	647,159 (10.8%)
1901-02	1,259 (7.3%)		55,437 (14.4%)	643,711 (19.7%)
1906-07	1,469 (8.1%)		70,614 (14.8%)	787,173 (20.0%)

Finally there was the question of female education among the Muslims. That this problem was becoming more and more acute every year was realised by even the orthodox leaders of the Muhammadan Educational Conference and, at very many places, committees were set up to tackle it. Among the educated Muslims there was growing realisation that unless their womenfolk were dragged out of the mire of ignorance there could be no real progress. But orthodoxy and conservatism had such firm roots in Muslim homes that for a long time no substantial progress was possible. Even in 1907 the number of Muslim girls in public institutions was not more than 77,244 and in private institutions not more than 44,455, thus making a grand total of 121,699, as compared to the non-Muslim total of 5,266,933. Besides, there was only one Muslim girl taking a collegiate course; while in secondary schools the number of Muslim girls was less than 150. All the concentration was thus in primary schools, where it was easier for girls to abandon their studies as soon as they reached the age of puberty.

CHAPTER SIX

Role of the Press

IT IS difficult to trace with complete accuracy the beginnings of Muslim newspapers (that is, those owned and edited by Muslims and having an Islamic bias) under the British Raj; but whatever be the year in which the earliest of these were founded and whatever was their purpose, their medium was decidedly Persian and remained so for a considerable length of time, till Urdu replaced it.

Probably one of the first Muslim ventures in modern journalism was made as early as 1830 by one Shaikh Alimullah. There is an entry in the records of the Public Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, of his having been granted a licence to start a newspaper called *Samachar Sukha Ranjendro*, to be published both in Persian and Bengali.

Two years later another Muslim newspaper made its appear-

ance. It was called *Mah-i-Alam Firuz* and was also in Persian. In 1835 one Ghulam Husain of Calcutta started another paper, also in Persian, called *Sultan-ul Akhbar*. Then there was the *Siraj-ul Akhbar* of Bahadur Shah, the last Mughal Emperor, published from Delhi; and the Persian bi-weekly *Mihr-i-Munir*. These newspapers were crude literary efforts; they seemed to have had little or no influence on Muslim public opinion, which, in any event, hardly existed at the time. However, it is possible that there might have been a few more newspapers because, according to the *Friend of India*, "at the beginning of the year 1838 the rumours of a Russian invasion of India were diligently spread throughout the country by means of a seditious Muhammadan press supported by the impulse and gold of Persia."¹

The introduction of lithography into India saw the establishment of Persian and Urdu presses with Delhi leading with its first lithographic press founded in 1837. This had a wholesome influence on the development of Persian and Urdu literatures. Soon, thanks to this invention, not only newspapers, but pamphlets and books, Government notifications and legislative acts, made their appearance in these languages. Moreover, lithographic publications, being obtainable at comparatively cheap rates, increased people's appetite for knowledge and information and consequently created in them an urge to read newspapers, a habit which was until then almost absent. Though this habit was limited to a small circle, its significance, because of its potentialities for the future, could not be minimised.²

Probably the first Urdu newspaper was the *Agra Akhbar*, which started publication some time in 1830. It is not possible to trace the name of its founder but it is extremely unlikely that he was a non-Muslim. According to one writer, the newspaper had a reputation for "brilliant leaders" and a special flair for recording "growls from subalterns and complaints from beauti-

¹ *The Friend of India*, February 27, 1851. However, of the hundred "native" newspapers and periodicals that were issued in Bengal from 1818 to 1851, there was not a single Muslim newspaper or periodical. See Rev. J. Long's *Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government relating to Native Printing Presses and Publications*, No. XXII, 145-48.

² See Saksena: *A History of Urdu Literature*, 21-22 and 265-66.

ful young ladies, disappointed widows and manoeuvring mothers".³

Then there was *Sayyad-ul Akhbar* started in 1837 from Delhi by Sir Syed's elder brother, Syed Muhammad Khan. Unfortunately, while the newspaper was in its infancy, the founder, still in the prime of youth, died of cholera. Sir Syed, therefore, took its affairs under his care. He borrowed money to put it on sound financial basis, appointed a competent editor to conduct it and himself contributed occasional articles to its columns. But his efforts proved in vain. *Sayyad-ul Akhbar*, owing to lack of sufficient readers, was unable to make ends meet. Sir Syed, in desperation, abandoned the project, and suffered heavy financial loss. Apparently there was no public demand for a newspaper among the Muslims. Besides, the 1857 rebellion, with all the suspicions that it created in its wake, could have hardly helped any such venture. Sir Syed was aware of the immense possibilities of this medium, especially for rousing Muslim consciousness. He had, however, to wait for almost thirty years before embarking upon another venture.

Till about 1860 there was no Muslim newspaper of any consequence, though an exception could be made in the case of *Delhi Akhbar*, an Urdu newspaper started from Delhi in 1838 by Moulvi Muhammad Baqar, father of Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad, the famous Urdu scholar.⁴ But the newspaper was more of a religious than a political nature, perhaps because the Moulvi himself was a leader of a certain sect of the Sunnis and believed in propagating its superiority over the other sects in Islam. However, the paper had to cease publication in 1857 and did not appear again.

Undoubtedly, the first important Muslim newspaper was Sir Syed's *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, founded in 1866. It was the organ of the Scientific Society of Aligarh. At first a weekly issued on every Friday, it was later turned into a bi-weekly,

³ See the article, "The Press in India—Its Origin and Growth" by G. P. Pillai in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January-April, 1899, 16-38.

⁴ According to Saksena, Moulvi Muhammad Baqar was "a pioneer of journalism in Northern India". See Saksena's *A History of Urdu Literature*, 274.

appearing every Tuesday and Friday. According to Hali, Sir Syed not only managed its financial affairs but, since its inception, wrote practically all the editorial comments⁵ though, till May 1878, Haji Ismail Khan was its nominal editor. In the first few years Sir Syed commented mostly on political matters; not so much on Indian politics as on international events, particularly in their relation to the Islamic countries. For instance, he often defended, in column after column, the role of Turkey in the Turco-Armenian dispute.

To attract European readers and also to satisfy the new-born zest for English reading among educated Muslims, the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* divided each of its newspages into two columns, one containing the news in English and the other its Urdu translation. Often some of its important editorials and feature articles, written by Urdu authors of repute such as Hali, Shibli, or Zaka Ullah, were also translated and given in English. Moreover, long extracts from English journals were frequently published in Urdu translation.

Through the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* Sir Syed and his colleagues propagated their views not only on political controversies but also on social, religious and educational affairs. For many years, on a number of public matters, the *Gazette* took an unorthodox attitude. Its criticisms of Government actions were often fearless and severe; while its front-page always carried the motto: "To permit the liberty of the press is the part of wise Government; to preserve it is the part of a free people."

For instance, in the years 1876-78 there was much talk of Government suppressing "native" newspapers. The fears were real; but no action had yet been taken. Sir Syed at once threw his weight against any kind of suppression. "I am confident", he wrote, "that the new Viceroy will not associate his name with any move to throttle the freedom of the vernacular newspapers. Those who desire this mischief are not apparently aware of the consequences it will bring in its wake. However, Lord Lytton is not so ignorant of them as to be a party to any such

⁵ See Hali's *Hayat-e-Javeed* (Urdu text), 105 (Part I).

disgraceful behaviour. It will not only harm Indians but annoy Englishmen."⁶

Unlike many Urdu newspapers—and by 1885 their number had become considerable—the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* was not a financial liability. It did not make profits but, because of its regular 500 readers, was always able to make ends meet. Furthermore, unlike most of the vernacular newspapers, i.e. not only those in Urdu but also in other Indian languages, the *Gazette* was always punctual in its appearance. In those days this was quite an achievement, especially when it was not unusual for vernacular dailies to appear sometimes thrice a week only; or for weeklies not to appear for a couple of months; or for monthlies to cease publication suddenly without even a notice to its regular subscribers and then as suddenly reappear after a long lapse.

The Aligarh Institute Gazette was, therefore, accepted as a serious organ of public opinion.⁷ Besides, its news items were taken as authentic and its views were respected. In fact, its sober and realistic approach to current problems was one of its most distinguished characteristics. As Hali, in his oriental picturesqueness, puts it:

In its presentation, there was no malice towards any sect or community; it never tried to please its readers by giving up

⁶ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, May 12, 1876.

⁷ As a well-known British writer explained: "A selection of articles from the last two years' issue of . . . the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* would form a curious and instructive record of the views of an energetic and influential, though numerically small, section of the Indian Muhammadans as regards Russo-Turkish, Russo-Afghan and Indo-Afghan politics. . . . It is one of the best native journals in Upper India but the English reader must not be led by English analogies into a misconception as to the influence of a native Indian newspaper. The *Gazette* boasts of a steady circulation of three hundred, or at the very outside, three hundred and fifty copies a fortnight; but, as is shown in an article published in a recent number of the *New Quarterly Magazine*, the circulation, or in other words, the subscription list, may be a very inadequate measure of the real number of readers, and the many others who are indirectly affected by the paper, though they may never have bought or read a copy. The important fact is this that journals of this description express the opinions of the classes who influence the multitude." (T. H. S. Escott: *Pillars of the Empire*, 168-69).

dignity and seriousness . . . it did not slow down its voice by asking for the good of only a part of our people as distinct from general welfare. It was never unhappy about the progress of non-Muslims. It kept aloof from the quarrels between Hindus and Muslims. It mourned with the same solemnity and grief the death of other leaders as that of its own great men. Finally, though it often criticised the Government, it never lost its moderation, grace and courtesy, which are the jewels of a conquered people.⁸

When due allowance is made for sentimental exaggerations, common in all Oriental writers of the time, this can be taken as a fair estimate of the work done by the *Gazette*. In any case, no one was better qualified to speak about it than Hali. He had watched the growth and progress of the newspaper at close hand, perhaps more closely than any other man except Sir Syed, and was himself one of its contributors.

The Gazette had a fairly uninterrupted life till the end of our period and some years thereafter. During Sir Syed's absence in England it continued publication. In fact his well known "travel notes" were first published in its columns. However, its circulation fluctuated and by 1890 it had dwindled to such an extent that it had to be incorporated in the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College *Magazine*, a bi-lingual monthly edited jointly by Beck and Shibli.⁹ Moreover, since the establishment of the College, there was a distinct change in the policy of the paper. It had become much more pro-British and rather hostile to the Hindus. Apart from the activities of the Congress, which Sir Syed did not view with sympathy, Beck's influence on him proved to be decisive, alienating the Syed more and more from the mainstream of Indian political life and turning him into a defender of the *status quo*.

Going back to 1885, we find that there were not more than two Muslim dailies throughout India.¹⁰ Both were in Urdu

⁸ Hali: *Hayat-e-Javed* (Urdu text), 105 (Part I).

⁹ In the latter half of 1903 the *Gazette* ceased to be a bi-lingual publication, its English Section being dropped. See comments on this change in the *Moslem Chronicle*, November 7, 1903.

¹⁰ See the *Indian Press Guide*.

and possessed hardly any influence in the country. One, published from Badaun (N.W.P.) by one Moulvi M. Afzal Ali, sold at a pice per copy and was called *Saeed-ul Akhbar*. The other, called *Hazar Dastan* was founded in Hyderabad (Deccan) in 1880 by Syed Hasan Jashn and sold, surprisingly enough, at the high price of 2 annas per copy. Then there was the *Muslim Herald* of Madras, founded in October 1884 by one Khan Bahadur Ahmed Muhiuddin. It was published in English thrice a week, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and had a circulation of 500.¹¹ In South India it had a considerable influence among educated Muslims. The newspaper was a great supporter of Sir Syed and his politics. Of the other Muslim newspapers published thrice a week mention must be made of *Kosside Mumbai* (in Gujrati), run by a Bombay merchant, Ghulam Ali Ghulam Husain. It was partly religious and partly commercial. Then there was the *Ittifaq*, the journal of the Madras Muhammadan Association, published thrice a week.

There were a number of Muslim bi-weeklies, mostly of a cheap type. Only a few were serious journals, published for guiding public opinion. Reference has already been made to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*. Then there was the *Akhbar-i-Darus Sultanat*, published, every Wednesday and Saturday as the name suggests, from Calcutta, then the Indian metropolis; the *Nujmul Akhbar* from Etawah (in N.W.P.); the *Punjabi Akhbar* from Lahore; and the *Deccan Journal* from Hyderabad (Deccan). However, the most important of the Muslim bi-weeklies, next to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, was the *Vakil* of Amritsar. Edited jointly by Shaikh Ghulam Muhammad and Khwaja Samad Shah, it specialised in Islamic news which it copied from Arabic and Turkish newspapers. Particularly during the Turco-Armenian war it gave copious accounts of Muslim bravery and, by its vigorous stand in defence of the Sultan, was able to raise its circulation considerably.

Politically, the *Punjab Observer*, edited in English by Shaikh Abdul Qadir (then a young Muslim graduate, who later became

¹¹ See the Khan Bahadur's statement to this effect before the Public Service Commission. Proceedings of the Public Service Commission (relating to Madras Presidency including Coorg), V, 112.

a member of the Secretary of State's Council) and published every Wednesday and Saturday from Lahore was equally important. To its columns many Muslim graduates, particularly those of Aligarh, contributed. In its policy, the journal not only upheld Sir Syed's ideas but propagated them with vigour and faith. Though not hostile to the Hindus, it often attacked the Congress leaders and accused them of sedition-mongering.

Another Muslim bi-weekly published in English was the *Muhammadan* of Madras. Established in 1890, it came out every Monday and Thursday. It was a great champion of the Muslim cause and gave full support in political and social matters to Sir Syed and his Aligarh movement. Once the *Muhammadan* created quite a stir over the appointment of an obscure Muslim to the Governor's Council. The protest attracted attention not only in India but also in England.¹²

Of weeklies, the number was at least fifty; they were run by all sorts of Muslims for all sorts of purposes. Some propagated unani medicine; some encouraged religious practices; and some were published just to sing the praises of their rich patrons or of saints. But there were a few devoted to public welfare and genuinely interested in public affairs. Among them the most important was the *Muhammadan Observer*, later called (in 1894) the *Moslem Chronicle*. In fact, it was perhaps the most important organ of Muslim opinion in India during this period and occupied a distinct place in "native" journalism. Its views were often quoted by *The Times* and other British newspapers as representative of Muslim reaction to developments in India.¹³ The Congress newspapers also paid it much attention. In the columns of the *Bengalee*, the *Indian Mirror*, the *Hindu Patriot*, the *Indian Daily Telegraph* and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, controversies with the *Moslem Chronicle*, particularly

¹² See an editorial on the subject in the *Moslem Chronicle*, February 13, 1895. In the closing years of our period, however, the *Muhammadan* had become much less hostile to the Congress. See, for instance, its well-known editorial on whether the Indian Muslims were Indians first and Muslims next or vice versa, quoted in the *Bengalee*, December 19, 1906.

¹³ See the article entitled, "The Indian Muhammadans" and "The Musalman Unrest", in *The Times* of June 4, 1895 and August 30, 1897, respectively.

as regards some political issues, were a regular feature. Even abuses were hurled at one another.

The Moslem Chronicle, or the *Muhammadan Observer* as it was then called, was founded in 1872. It was mainly a political journal though on its front-page it described itself as "A weekly newspaper of politics, literature and society". Writing in 1895 a retrospective account of its own activities, the *Moslem Chronicle* boasted of the "journalistic battle" that it had been fighting on two fronts. One, against "the fads and not unoften the mis-representations of our Hindu compatriots in the Press"; and the other against "the well-intentioned but unwise and impracticable principles" which the Government, under pressure from the Hindus, was introducing.¹⁴

Describing itself as the "mouthpiece" of the sixty million Muslims, the *Moslem Chronicle* once explained its role thus:

If we have been now and then pungent in our expressions, it was not because we loved to indulge in violent language for the morbid taste of violence itself, but because we considered it consistent with our loyalty to the Crown to prefer outspokenness, however bitter it might have been, to what we thought to be a dishonest suppression of hard facts and strong sentiments in order to make them palatable to Government.

Its policy, to use its own words, was:

- (1) "unflinching loyalty to the Crown";
- (2) "brotherly feelings towards all communities"; and
- (3) "the fair, fearless, straightforward, respectful and loyal representation of the interests of the Indian Musalmans".

The Moslem Chronicle was published from Calcutta. Edited by Abdul Hamid, one of the leading Muslim graduates of Bengal, it gave plenty of both news and views about and for Muslims, as also articles of interest for the Muslims, particularly about current political controversies.

Of weeklies in Urdu there was no dearth; though their finances were always in the doldrums. "Whatever they be," Sir Syed once said, "I have heard three things about them. First, that they

¹⁴ *The Moslem Chronicle*, January 10, 1895.

have no readers. Secondly, that even if they have readers, subscriptions are never paid. And thirdly, they go to people who publicly boast that even without asking they receive the newspapers."¹⁵ About twenty years previously he had given in one of the issues of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* an interesting account of the finances of "native newspapers."¹⁶ He was firmly of the opinion that, but for the English-language press, there would have been no vernacular press. "The native editors," he wrote, "rely exclusively on the news-items in the English press, from where they copy them and fill their own pages."¹⁷ This was because of extreme paucity of funds. The readers of "native" newspapers always tried to avoid payment. If they paid one annual subscription they expected it to last for at least three years. Because of this depressing state of affairs many vernacular papers vied with one another to catch the favour of some raja or nawab. For several newspaper promoters that was the only means of survival.

However, after 1882 there was a considerable change for the better. The repeal of the Vernacular Press Act eased many difficulties, while the reduction of the postage (for vernacular newspapers) from half an anna to a pice gave great stimulus to their circulation. As a result, hundreds of new journals made their appearance; some began to have readers even in distant places.

But this development was more helpful to Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi newspapers than to their Urdu compatriots, which were shabbily produced, had much less circulation and suffered because of finances. Besides, even in the so-called Urdu Press the Hindu influence was dominant. In fact, some of the most important Urdu newspapers like the *Akhbar-i-Am* and the *Koh-i-Noor* were owned and edited by Hindus. Even the *Paisa Akhbar*, though entirely under the editorial control of Mahbub Alam, was owned by the Naval Kishore Press, the famous Hindu

¹⁵ In his speech at the Muhammadan Educational Conference held at Meerut in 1896. See Sir Syed: *Lecturon Ka Majmu'a* (Urdu Text).

¹⁶ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, May 12, 1876 and July 14, 1877.

¹⁷ See an article on the *Pioneer* in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, June 19, 1877. Also see the article, "Why the Native Press should be licensed?" in the *Calcutta Review*, January 1900, 130-50.

concern. The same was the case with the *Victoria Paper*, formerly called the *Akhbar-i-Chasma-i-Faiz*.¹⁸

All in all, the Muslims did well in weekly journalism, though many of their journals, as I have remarked earlier, were more in the nature of crude advertisements than news or views. However, there were some like the *Akhbar Mihr-i-Nimroz* of Kanpur; the *Najmul Akhbar* of Etawah (in U.P.); the *Riaz-ul-Akhbar* and *Fitna* of Gorakhpur (in U.P.); the *Shafaq* of Hyderabad (Deccan); the *Marwar Gazette* of Jodhpur; the *Reformer* and the *Rafiq-i-Hind* of Lahore; the *Oudh Punch* of Lucknow; the *Shamsul-Akhbar* of Madras; the *Tooti-i-Hind*, the *Zareef-i-Hind*, and the *Shena-i-Hind* of Meerut; the *Mooltan Advertiser* in the Punjab; the *Jam-i-Jamshed* and *Aina-i-Sikhandari* of Moradabad; as also the three weeklies owned by Moulvi S. M. Nasarat Ali and published from Delhi, the *Nasaratul-Akhbar*, the *Mehr-i-Darakhsan* and the *Nusrat-ul-Islam*, which played an important part in creating interest among Muslim readers in current affairs.¹⁹

In 1888, as a result of the appearance of the famous *Paisa Akhbar*, Urdu journalism underwent an almost revolutionary change. This newspaper, which was first published from Gujranwala (in the Punjab) and later from Lahore, was sold at one pice when most "native" newspapers were priced at not less than an anna. Besides, the articles in the *Paisa Akhbar* were not only on modern subjects but differed considerably, both in style and contents, from those of its contemporaries. There was little of the conflict of *Gul* and *Bulbul* or the love scenes of *Majnun* and *Farhad*.²⁰ On the contrary, serious problems of general

¹⁸ At this time the *Victoria Paper* was owned by Rao Bahadur Diwan Gian Chand of Amritsar. However, it was first started in Lahore in 1853 by Rai Diwan Chand. *Koh-i-Noor* was owned and edited by Harsukh Rai of Delhi and *Akhbar-i-Am* was founded by Pandit Mukand Lal, a Brahmin from Kashmir.

¹⁹ Of these, one of the most popular newspapers was *Rafiq-i-Hind*. Its circulation was about 700 copies per issue. See the evidence of its editor, Munshi Muharram Ali Chisti, before the Public Service Commission. *Proceedings of the Public Service Commission (Relating to the N.W.P. and Oudh)*, 203.

²⁰ See Dr. Bool Chand's paper on "Urdu journalism in the Punjab" in the *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, April, 1933, 29-42.

interest, social and political, were tackled. Further, the newspaper made its appearance in an entirely new size—the common size for English papers but unknown till then in Urdu journalism.²¹

The *Paisa Akhbar*, in spite of its low price, soon became a paying proposition. This was more due to advertisements, which had hardly appeared in the columns of the Urdu Press before. As sales of the *Paisa Akhbar* increased, it got more advertisements, its popularity raising its publicity value. Till then, Urdu newspapers did not know this simple fact of newspaper management; it was the *Paisa Akhbar*, which initiated them into its efficacy.

The person responsible for the successful introduction of all these “innovations” was *Paisa Akhbar*’s talented editor, Munshi Mahbub Alam. He was a clever journalist. He had his finger on the pulse of the public and was shrewd enough to give the people not only what they wanted but in the manner they wanted. Thus he gave them gossip, titbits and occasional doses of new ideas subtly put. In ridiculing the mullas he explained how the lack of modern education made them ridiculous characters. Moreover, he talked to his readers in a simple unaffected style, impressing upon them the need for a proper appraisal of social and political issues. He also emphasised that an Urdu editor, with no knowledge of English, would be totally ignorant of current affairs. He, therefore, urged his colleagues in the Urdu Press to learn English and equip themselves with modern technique.

For his part the Moulvi not only acquired a knowledge of English; he also undertook a visit to Europe with a view to studying all aspects of European journalism. Through the columns of the *Paisa Akhbar* he kept his readers informed of the impressions that he gathered in different countries of Europe and their lessons for India. He was convinced that, unless Urdu journalism modernised itself, there was no future for it.

On his return to India, the Moulvi plunged into giving a new

²¹ Ibid.

shape to the Urdu Press and, for this purpose, training new men; of the old ones he had no hopes. Hence his title:

ایڈیٹر کرایڈیٹر

(editor-making editor). He was fairly successful in this. In fact it was because of him that the Muslims in the Punjab were able to produce such great editors as Hakim Ghulam Nabi of *al-Hukma*, Munshi Ahmad Din of *Ghamkhawr-i-Alam*, Muhammad-ud Din Fauq of *Kashmiri* and Maulvi Shuja-ud Dowla of *Millat*.

Coming back to Urdu weeklies, the most distinguished of these was undoubtedly Sir Syed's *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, modelled on the London *Spectator* and the *Tatler*, the two journals which impressed him the most during his short visit to England. In fact, after their perusal he was so much convinced of the necessity of having a similar journal for the Muslims in India that he ordered in London the block for the cover page of *Tahzibul Akhlaq* and brought it home with him. On his return to Aligarh, Sir Syed, in order to launch the new journal, formed a small committee of his friends, each of whom paid an annual subscription of Rs. 60 to meet the initial expenses. The ordinary annual subscription, however, was fixed at four and half rupees.

Tahzibul Akhlaq first made its appearance on December 24, 1870 and had an uninterrupted existence for the next six years. Sir Syed was both its editor and manager. On its front page was prominently displayed an Arabic saying:

حب الفوم تتمه الايمان ن ن يسع في المغراز يسعي في المرازدينه

"The love for the community is drawn from religion. Hence he who strives to raise the honour of his community [necessarily] helps to raise the honour of his religion."

To the columns of *Tahzibul Akhlaq* many distinguished Muslims contributed; of them the more regular were Mohsinul Mulk and Moulvi Chirag Ali. Both had an easy style, were unorthodox in their outlook on Islam, and, like Sir Syed, were extremely eager to bring about social transformation among the Muslims. They wrote mostly on Islamic subjects. In the journal,

however, other topics were also discussed, though social and religious matters always predominated.

Tahzibul Akhlaq stood for a new orientation of Islam. Therefore, from the day of its inception, it attacked many traditional practices. The Ulama were naturally furious. They abused the journal from the pulpit or through the columns of the conservative and old established newspapers. Even new journals were started to counteract the views expressed in *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, prominent among them being *Nurul Afaq* and *Nurul Anwar*. Violent attacks were even made by an otherwise sober journal such as the *Risala-e-Ishayatus Sunna*, an organ of the least orthodox group among the Muslims, the Ahl-i-hadith.²²

However, admirers of *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, whose number was daily growing, were no less fanatical in their devotion to it. In fact, they awaited, it is said, every issue breathlessly. Besides, it gave rise to a new style in Urdu literature—simple, direct and shorn of ornamentation. All this added to the paper's popularity. Apparently the readers were tired of old forms. They yearned for something new; and the *Tahzibul Akhlaq* not only satisfied their needs but created new interests and new channels of thought for them.

All in all, *Tahzibul Akhlaq* stood, as Hali points out, for a new Islam in India, which could flourish under the British with the same vigour as before.²³ By emphasising the magnificent achievements of Europe in various fields of human endeavour, it brought home to its readers the realisation of the new fields that lay before them as a result of India's contact with the West. For this a rational approach towards Islam, and towards its practices and institutions, was essential. The journal, therefore, denounced all kinds of bigotry, illiteracy and superstitions. Though unpopular at first, it soon came to be

²² Among other newspapers, started in opposition to *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, Hali mentions the following: *Lohe-Mahfooz* (from Moradabad), *Terweene-Sadi* (from Agra), and from other parts of the N.W.P., *Imadatul Afaq*, *Shihabe-Saqib* and *Tayeedul Islam*. (See Hali: *Hayat-e-Javeed*, Urdu text, 227, Part I)

²³ Ibid., 135 (Part I). Also see Syed Ghulam Hyder's article, "What are the real objects of *Tahzibul Akhlaq*" (*Tahzibul Akhlaq*, Zilhaj I, 1289, Vol. III, No. 20).

accepted as the chief instrument for social reform among the Muslims and was widely read in literary circles, particularly those of Lucknow and Delhi.

That the journal had to overcome many obstacles before its voice could be heard is painfully recorded in a classic passage by Sir Syed himself. It appeared in one of the editorials in *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, which, as I have already remarked, was modelled on the *Spectator* and *Tatler* of Addison and Steele. He wrote:

Steele and Addison were fortunate that their contemporaries used to read and appreciate their writings. But our misfortune is that our writings are regarded as anti-religious. To read them is to court perdition. Steele and Addison used to be compensated for their day's toil and labour by listening to the quick applause which followed the publication of each issue of their paper; whereas on the publication of our paper we do not expect anything but curses and condemnation. Steele and Addison used to hear kind words from those to whom they rendered kind services. We, on the other hand, receive unkind things in return for kind deeds. It was not difficult for Steele and Addison to win over a thousand hearts. But for us it is extremely difficult to captivate a single heart. Steele and Addison had only to attract sound and willing hearts. We, on the other hand, have first to create the hearts before we can attract them.

Moreover, the public stigmatises our views as expressions of insanity and hypochondria. But there is method in our madness; we know what we are doing. Therefore having regard to what has been so far achieved in this brief period, we trust in God and look forward to greater results. And we make bold to say that better days are ahead of us. When exactly these will come we do not know. But come they must; of that we are absolutely certain.²⁴

²⁴ English translation by Dr. Syed Abdul Latif. See his *Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*, 117. Also for the influence the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had on the policy of *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, see Sir Syed's article in *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, Muharram I, 1289 A.H., Vol. III, No. 1.

Tahzibul Akhlaq was suspended twice, once because Sir Syed could not spare the necessary time. He was too engrossed in other activities, particularly in writing the *Tafseer* or commentary on the Quran. The suspension caused much disappointment and pleas were made from many quarters for its reappearance. Ultimately, Nazir Ahmed was able to prevail upon Sir Syed, and the journal restarted publication. Mumtaz Ali of Lahore undertook to look after its management while many prominent writers such as Mohsinul Mulk, Nazir Ahmed, Hali, Shibli and Mushtaq Ahmad promised to contribute to its pages regularly.

The journal's reappearance was greatly welcomed by Sir Syed's followers; but there were some religious fanatics like Moulvi Abu Sayeed Muhammad Husain of Lahore and conservative organs like *Najmul Akhbar* of Etawah, which saw in this "an invitation to restart the campaign of hate which had been absent for some time."²⁵ They did not hesitate to restart their vendetta against it but it proved futile because times had changed and Sir Syed's opponents were not able to carry the people with them.

But there were also some friends who did not favour the journal's reappearance because they felt it had outlived its utility. There was, they said, no further use in talking about English education because the Muslims were now conscious of its advantages. The Muslims had also realised, these friends argued, the urgency of social reforms and the need for economic reformation. What was the sense in harping on the same old tunes, which had become so familiar? To such objections Mohsinul Mulk gave a spirited reply. Even granting that all that the critics said was true—for his part he doubted every word of their contention—then too there was a lot to be done. "The object of this paper is not limited," he wrote. "On the contrary it is very wide and all-embracing. *Tahzibul Akhlaq* aims to cover all the fields of human endeavour—be they theoretical or practical, social or cultural, religious or worldly. It strives towards removing every obstacle, improving every defect and helping every

²⁵ Quoted in *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, Shawal 1, 1311 A.H., Vol. I., No. 1 (New Series). See for why *Tahzibul Akhlaq* was restarted, Mumtaz Ali's article in *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, Supplement to the Annual Volume for 1296 A.H.

progressive effort. And these are matters of which the community, so long as it lives, will always be in need."

However the new *Tahzibul Akhlaq* was considerably different from the old one. There were fewer articles on education and social reforms and more on religious controversies, particularly on the *Naturi* philosophy of Sir Syed. Occasionally some creative essays, which later became classics in Urdu literature were also published. Besides, Hali's famous *Musaddas* also first appeared in the columns of *Tahzibul Akhlaq*.

A word must also be said about the literary role of the journal. According to Hali, it "revolutionised our conception of literature". One of its main achievements was to purify the literary taste of the Indian Muslims, which had long been vitiated by the influence of Persian. *Tahzibul Akhlaq* exposed relentlessly all that was artificial and pompous in the old literature and gave rise to a new style in Urdu, simple, straight and unaffected. By translating into Urdu some of the masterpieces of European literature, the journal was able to render a unique service to Urdu.²⁶ For the first time the public came to realise how hollow their literary treasures were as compared with those of Europe. This inspired literary men to aim at new ideals in conformity with changing times. Sometimes this went too far, as for instance when it became a fashion to incorporate whole sentences of English into Urdu passages. In this Hali and Nazir Ahmad were the greatest sinners; but Sir Syed was no exception. In fact he once vigorously defended this practice.

Another important weekly was *al-Bashir* of Etawah in the United Provinces. It was founded in 1899 and soon became popular throughout North India. The reasons for its success over its older contemporaries were: (1) punctuality in publication; (2) good news service; (3) varied and interesting articles. Edited by Maulvi Bashiruddin, who was previously in charge of *Najmul Akhbar*, its policy, to use the words from one of its editorials addressed to the Muslims, was:

- (1) "Be loyal to the British";
- (2) "Do not listen to the Congress";

²⁶ *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, Zilkaid 1, 1311 A.H., Vol. 1, No. 2 (New Series).

- (3) "Concentrate all your energies on English education and help institutions such as the M.A.O. College and the Muhammadan Educational Conference".

Al-Bashir took a most prominent part in the Hindi-Urdu controversy of 1899-1900 and published in its columns no less than 70 articles bitterly attacking Sir Antony MacDonnell and his pro-Hindi policy. The journal was never sympathetic towards the Hindus and their aspirations; but after this controversy it became openly anti-Hindu.

For the propagation of female education among the Muslims Mumtaz Ali had also started at this time, under the editorship of his wife, the famous weekly magazine *Tahzibun Niswan*. Compared with other Urdu journals of the time, its get up was pleasant and style elegant. It scrupulously avoided inserting cheap, sexy advertisements, with which many "native" newspapers used to be liberally sprinkled. Besides, *Tahzibun Niswan* provided its readers with a summary of the week's news and published articles of interest on current problems. There was also a section devoted to children. All this added considerably to the popularity of the weekly and it soon became a force in Urdu journalism.

Among other important Muslim weeklies, mention should be made of *Bashirul Akhbar* of Delhi; *Akhbare-Mehri-Nimroz* of Bijnore, the *Imperial Paper* of Lahore; *Kashful Akhbar* of Bombay; and *Akhbar-e-Alam* of Meerut. Then there was *Inquilab-e-Azeem* of Bombay, founded in 1902 by Munshi Ghulam Rasul. Though it often contained good political articles its main object was to work for the improvement of the Urdu script, which it described as not only ugly and cumbersome but also extremely difficult to learn; it recommended the use of "type" rather than "litho" printing from calligraphy.

Except for some of these journals, weekly journalism—as also daily journalism—did not have much influence on the Muslim public. The reasons were obvious. First, most of these newspapers had no policy. Secondly, they lived on the patronage of some saint or prince. Thirdly, their editors were as ignorant of world affairs as their readers—in some cases even more so. And lastly, nine journals out of ten managed to exist because of cheap sex vitality advertisements, usually inserted by quacks or hakims

who paid well as they got good response from these advertisements.

The real influence was, therefore, exerted by monthly periodicals, a good many of which were started by English-educated Muslims, fresh from the University. Perhaps the most outstanding of these was Shaikh Abdul Qadir's *Makhzan*, published from Lahore. To its pages many young and promising Muslims contributed; one of them was the famous Sir Muhammad Iqbal, then a young professor of English at Islamia College. Many of Iqbal's well-known poems such as "Tarana-e-Hindi", "Hindaya", "Jugnu-oar-Subah-ka-Sitara", "Chand", "Ek Prinda oar Jugnu" and "Rukhsal-ae-Bazme Jehan" first appeared in the columns of *Makhzan*. That they had tremendous influence on the Muslim mind was accepted even then; through the pages of this magazine Iqbal's genius was for the first time being recognised. Prominent among other contributors were Shibli, the author; Muhammad Ismail, the lyricist; Muhammad Noor Ilahi, the dramatist; Akbar Allahabadi, the humourist; Zafar Ali Khan, the politician; Shad Azimabadi and Aga Shair Qazalbash, the poets; and Aslam Jairajpuri, the historian.²⁷

Apart from its distinguished contributors, *Makhzan* specialised in the presentation of new ideas. While opposed to the use of English words in Urdu,²⁸ much in vogue at this time, the journal aimed at acquainting its readers with the treasures of English thought and through them influencing the growth of new trends among Muslim intellectuals.

Politically *Makhzan* was a great supporter of the Aligarh

²⁷ *Makhzan* was welcomed as "a laudable effort to introduce a healthy atmosphere in Urdu journalism" by the *Kayastha Samachar*, May 1901, 371-73. For a statement of its policy, see *Makhzan*, April 1901. In the same editorial four Urdu magazines (1) *Dilgudas*; (2) *Ma'rif*; (3) *Afsar*; and (4) *Oudh Review*, were mentioned as of importance.

²⁸ The tendency towards using English words into Urdu had become so rampant that a retired English District Magistrate, who was well versed in Urdu, suggested that the Anjumane-Taraqqi-e-Urdu should undertake immediately the responsibility of preserving "the neatness and purity of the language". He said that he was appalled at the number of English words used in almost every Urdu periodical. See his article on the "Urdu Language" in *Makhzan*, February, 1905. Also see an article, "Our Mother Tongue", in the Urdu magazine *Talif-o-Isha'at* of January 15 and February 1, 1903.

Movement. Critical of the Congress, it always emphasised the loyalist role of the Muslims. However, from the literary point of view, it did not agree with the views of some of the leaders of the Aligarh School such as Hali, Shibli and Nazir Ahmad. Unlike them, *Makhzan* stood for purity of style, clarity of thought and simplicity in presentation.

Then there was the *Aligarh Monthly*, which first made its appearance under this title in January 1903. But it was the same old *M.A.O. College Magazine* in a new garb. Like its predecessor, the *Aligarh Monthly* had both an Urdu and an English section; but unlike it, its scope was much wider and soon the magazine became a medium for all kinds of intellectual discussion, particularly for graduates from Aligarh. However, its policy remained unchanged. An upholder of Sir Syed's ideas, it advocated Muslim exclusiveness and was an uncompromising critic of Congress politics.²⁹

Urdu-e-Mulla of Delhi was another well-known periodical. Edited by the distinguished poet-politician, Hasarat Mohani, then on the threshold of fame, this magazine exercised much influence on the rising Urdu literature. It championed the old forms of poetry in Urdu and was opposed to hasty "innovations". Somewhat conservative in outlook, it published many serious articles on current problems, social as well as political. Its tone, however, was much less pro-British than that of its contemporaries.

The famous journal *Ma'rif*, which played such an important part in the development of Urdu literature, was also started during this period. It was then edited by Moulvi Vaheed-us Salim and was distinguished by the contributions of many leading Ulama of the modern school, chief among them being Maulana Shibli. *Ma'rif* was meant to be an organ of the Nadwat-al Ulama; but it also published non-religious articles.

²⁹ For a full statement of its policy see "Ourselves" in the *Aligarh Monthly*, January 1903, wherein a hope was expressed that "the *Aligarh Monthly* . . . will in course of time become an organ to which Muhammadans in all parts of India will learn to look for an authoritative expression of opinion upon matters of public moment and of national interest."

Among the *Aligarh Monthly's* many distinguished contributors were Moulvi Muhammad Zaka Ullah, Mir Wilayat Husain, Aslam Jairajpuri, Abul Kalam Azad, Syed Nawab Ali and Syed Sajjad Hyder Yeldram.

Unfortunately, for financial and some other reasons, its publication had to be suspended for some years.

Of other religious publications, mention must be made of *al-Islah* of Patna, the organ of Isna Asharia; and *Shana-i-Hind*, the organ of Ahl-i-Hadith. Both believed in the superiority of their sects and openly condemned the activities of other sects. *Al-Nadwa* edited by Shibli and Habibur Rehman Khan Sherwani was perhaps the most broadminded of the religious journals. It avoided unnecessary sectarian controversies and tried to emphasise the progressive role of Islam.³⁰

In January 1903 *Asre Jadeed* made its appearance. Edited by the well-known social reformer, Ghulam-us Saqlain, this journal soon acquired a pre-eminent position in Urdu journalism. Though devoted mainly to social reforms among Muslims, it used to publish many interesting articles on political affairs as well. Despite its admiration for Sir Syed, it did not believe in following blindly the leaders of the Aligarh Movement and consequently was often outspokenly critical of their activities. Moreover, though Islamic in its outlook, *Asre Jadeed* stood for better understanding between Hindus and Muslims. In fact it was one of the very few important Muslim journals which advocated communal unity. The standard of its articles was by no means as high as that of *Makhzan* but its approach to socio-political problems was certainly more broadminded and non-sectarian. Besides, it always welcomed progressive trends in the country and through its monthly digest of news emphasised the significance of new developments.³¹

On the whole, however, the Muslim papers were more sectarian in outlook, demanding special safeguards and privileges for their community. Politically, they followed the Aligarh lead. Consequently, they rarely interested themselves in bringing the Hindus and Muslims together. *Asre Jadeed* attempted this sometimes but even this journal did so, rather half-heartedly. Perhaps *Ittihad*, the fortnightly paper edited by the famous novelist Abdul Halim Sharer, was the only shining exception. It was launched with the sole purpose of creating better rela-

³⁰ See an article on the achievements of *al-Nadwa* in the *Aligarh Monthly* (Urdu Section), January 1905.

³¹ For a full statement of its policy see *Asre Jadeed*, January 1903.

tions between the two communities; hence the name *Ittihad* or Unity.³² But despite Sharer's racy style and entertaining manner of putting things across, the paper was popular with neither the Muslims nor the Hindus. Hence it soon ceased publication.

In this short survey of the Muslim Press I have tried to cover the activities of almost all the important Muslim newspapers and periodicals published during the period under review.³³ But as we come to the last years we find that several of them had disappeared while many new ones had taken their place. This, however, was not peculiar to Urdu journalism. The majority of "native" papers were short-lived, coming into existence with the same unexpectedness as they dropped out. Some lived for a few years; others not even for a few months. Every year the Reporter of the Native Press noticed ten or sometimes even twenty papers closing their short careers, unwept and unsung. For instance in 1896, in the Bombay Presidency alone, no fewer than twenty-four newspapers ceased to exist; while, curiously enough, the same number of new ones were started.³⁴

However, most of the important Muslim journals, to which I have referred earlier, continued publication till the end of the period or even later. Besides, a few new ones were also started such as the *Akhbar-i-Islam* of Bombay, published daily

³² See an interesting article on "*Resalai Ittihad* and the mutual understanding between Hindus and Muslims" by Mir Wilayet Husain in the *Aligarh Monthly* (Urdu Section), August, 1904.

³³ Of the thirty-four "native" newspapers invited by Lord Curzon to send representatives to attend the Durbar in 1903, only six were Muslim:

1. *The Muhammadan* of Madras
2. *Al-Huq* of Sukkur (Sind)
3. *The Muslim Herald* of Bombay
4. *The Moslem Chronicle* of Calcutta
5. *The Observer* of Lahore
6. *Agra Akhbar* of Agra

Al-Huq was started in 1902 as a weekly from Sukkur but was later transferred to Hyderabad. It was published in Sindhi as well as English. The English section was at first edited by a Hindu but later a Muslim graduate from Aligarh, Syed Muhammad, took over the editorship.

³⁴ See R. P. Karkaria's article, "The Oldest Paper in India: the *Bombay Samachar*", in the *Calcutta Review*, April, 1898, 218-36.

in Gujarati, and the famous *Zamindar* of Lahore.³⁵ But all these newspapers, being in vernacular, had little political influence. Political developments during this period depended largely on the educated Indians who took special pride in reading only English language newspapers. To them the vernacular Press had little to offer except dull, uninteresting and uninformed reading. Moreover, of the vernacular Press, the Urdu newspapers were perhaps the worst. They lived in a constant fear of closing down and a large number of their readers came from ignorant and backward sections of Muslim society. They therefore, had little influence on the intelligentsia. Of course, some journals, such as the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, *al-Bashir*, *Vakil*, *Ma'rif*, *Makhzan* and *Asre Jadeed*, did play a notable part in Muslim affairs; but this was mainly because of the distinguished names associated with these journals. The English newspapers, though extremely few in number, were much more influential; on occasions their influence proved almost decisive.³⁶

This sorry state of the Urdu Press caused much concern to many leading Muslims. In fact Haji Mohammad Ismail, a close associate of Sir Syed, published a small book on Urdu newspapers in which he gave many valuable suggestions for their improvement. "Urdu newspapers", he wrote, "are as numerous as blackberries and many of them, not having a firm financial basis, have necessarily no fixed policy and consequently cannot exercise that healthy and wholesome influence on the minds of those who read them." He was, therefore, against, what he called, "the promiscuous starting of newspapers" incapable of educating public opinion. He was pained to see that a great majority of the Urdu newspapers lived on singing the praises of particular patrons or on unnecessarily abusing those of whom their patrons did not approve. Ismail was aware that financial dependence made the Urdu editors behave like this; but that was no reason

³⁵ *The Zamindar* was started as a weekly newspaper in June 1904 with the object of serving the interests and safeguarding the rights of the land-owning class in the Punjab. Later, however, under the editorship of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, it became a daily and played a considerable part in Muslim politics.

³⁶ Among the new English newspapers owned by the Muslims, mention must be made of the *Muslim Patriot* from Madras. Aggressively communal in its tone, it was critical of both the Hindus and the British.

why something should not be done to check this corruption and degeneration. Moreover, he warned the Muslims that unless they took a serious view of the situation their newspapers would never be able to command "those sources of information and intelligence so necessary for the successful and useful conduct of a newspaper these days". To get over the financial difficulties Ismail suggested "the coalescing of all these papers into several joint stock companies". He also made many useful suggestions for improving the literary side and the general get-up of the newspapers.³⁷

More severe than Ismail's strictures, however, were those by the eminent writer, Moulvi Aziz Mirza, who held an important position in the Nizam's Government at Hyderabad. Remarking that "our best newspapers were not comparable with even others' worst", he asked whether an Urdu newspaper had ever done any public service—campaigned for instance for the repeal of a bad law or the enactment of a good one; exposed any conspiracy or crime; brought honours to a deserving man living in obscurity; kept a correspondent anywhere or sent one to cover a grave situation; ever helped any good cause. He was pained to see how useless these papers had been to the community. Admitting that, "as the readers so the newspapers," he warned his co-religionists that unless they had a better press they would never progress in the modern age.³⁸

However, it would not be correct to accept these views unreservedly. Judging by Western standards, Urdu newspapers might have been cheap and uninteresting; but, when compared with other vernacular newspapers, they were not all that bad. Besides, though they had no influence on the educated class, on the large mass of half-educated Muslims their hold was considerable. Admittedly they were too poor in quality to give a lead on any matter but their propaganda value was considerable. In the beginning, when on the advice of the Ulama they

³⁷ *The Moslem Chronicle*, November 6, 1897. Also see Syed Abu Muhammad's article, "Our Urdu Newspapers", in the *Aligarh Monthly* (Urdu Section), January 1904.

³⁸ *Asre-Jadeed*, September 1903, 330-37. An interesting account of "Native Journalism" and its peculiar characteristics will be found in T. K. Gopal Panikkar's article on the subject in the *Calcutta Review*, October 1902, 287-91.

opposed Sir Syed, they caused him no amount of trouble; but later, when the Syed's popularity increased and his star rose, they were a great help to him. After his death they faithfully followed what his lieutenants advocated.

Their role, therefore, despite all the limitations and the drawbacks, was significant.³⁹ That was why, at the time of the Bombay session (1903) of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, a Muslim Press Conference was also organised. The move was set afoot in order to found a central organisation of all the Muslim editors, who were to work in co-operation with the Aligarh leaders. More than a dozen editors who had come as delegates from different parts of India to the Educational Conference attended the Press meeting. All agreed that there should be a central body to look after the Muslim Press, passed two or three resolutions to that effect, and dispersed after having elected a secretary to do the spade work.⁴⁰

Nothing, however, was heard of this organisation for about ten months. Then *Asre Jadeed* protested and asked what the Secretary was doing. He had done practically nothing. And so another person, Shaikh Jamal Ahmad, the editor of *Hamdard*, was put in charge. He was an enthusiastic young man with a flair for public service. He tried to contact most of the Muslim editors but to no avail. Only a few even cared to reply to his communications. He carried on for some time and then gave it up as a hopeless job. Since then, nothing more was heard of the so-called Muslim Press Conference, nor was any further move made to unite Muslim editors.

³⁹ The following comment from a British writer bears this out:

The Native papers may be wise or foolish, loyal or the reverse; but, such as they are, they constitute the true Press of India. The Press Law was an acknowledgement of the fact. Measured by the European standard, the Press circulation, or more properly speaking its subscription list, is ridiculously small; but the length of its list is no index to the amount of its influence. (T. H. S. Escott: *Pillars of the Empire*, 139.)

⁴⁰ See an article about the Muslim Press by Kazi Kabiruddin, Secretary of the Reception Committee of the Bombay session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference in the *Moslem Chronicle*, October 17, 1903. Also see an editorial, "The Proposed Press Association" in the *Moslem Chronicle*, January 14, 1905.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Religious and Social Reforms

IT DID NOT take long for men like Sir Syed, Nawab Abdul Latif and Sayed Ameer Ali, despite their orthodox upbringing, to realise that Muslim society, of which they themselves were so fond, had become an anachronism in the changed circumstances; it had to be remoulded if the Muslims were to take their full share in the new life under the British. They also knew that the Hindus had advanced a great deal and had gone far ahead of the Muslims, thanks to the pioneering zeal of men like Ram Mohan Roy and Mahadev Govind Ranade and the sustained work of institutions like the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj.

However, no one realised the urgency as well as the gravity of this situation more than Sir Syed. He knew the hold that Islam, with all its orthodox practices and rituals, had on the

Muslims; to make them give up old traditions which had become almost second nature with them, was no simple task; it was asking for more trouble and Sir Syed had already enough of it. And yet it had to be done if the Muslims were to live an honourable existence. Without a radical change in their religious and social outlook no progress was possible and, therefore, Sir Syed took all the risks and braved all the dangers.

In a way, Indian Wahabism, though this sounds paradoxical in view of its anti-British character, was a forerunner of this approach. Like Sir Syed, the great Wahabi leader, Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareli, also stood for the ruthless rejection of all accretions and declensions from the early Islam as preached by the Prophet and his Companions. But there the likeness ends because, basically, the difference between the two men was too deep ever to be bridged. Syed Ahmed hated the British; Sir Syed loved them. The former believed that Islam could never prosper under the British; the latter was convinced that it could flourish under the new rule with the same vigour and glory as before.

Moreover, Sir Syed was not as interested in purifying Islam as in working out a liberal Islam, compatible with nineteenth century Britain, in harmony with not only its general outlook but also its modernism, commercial methods and industrial patterns, its ethical values and its humanism. He was, however, not alone in this field; Ameer Ali and Chiragh Ali had developed a similar approach, though, by no means as intensely pro-British. Hali, Shibli and Mohsinul Mulk were some of the other great reformers; but they were such ardent followers of Sir Syed that they were always able to work out some sort of harmony in their views and activities. Basically, Sir Syed's lead on these matters was rarely questioned by them. They tolerated him as their Pope in religious affairs but obeyed him as their King in politics.

In an earlier chapter I have referred to the efforts he made, since the end of the revolt of 1857, to impress upon the British rulers the loyalty of the Muslims; in this chapter, I shall trace how he tried to inculcate that loyalty, largely non-existent till then, among his co-religionists. Sir Syed was convinced that the best way to do this was to demolish all the religious barriers that kept the Muslims away from the British. He, therefore,

embarked, quite early in his public career, upon the task of demonstrating the basic similarity between Islam and Christianity and bringing the Muslims and the British together on the spiritual plane.

This was, however, a post-1857 development. Before 1857 he was unquestionably interested in religious controversies and discussions but these had no direct bearing on his later ideas, which were to revolutionise Islam in India. This is obvious from the religious literature that he produced at that time, mostly pamphlets, about half a dozen in number. In none of them can we discern the emergence of the religious reformer; in none, were there any departures from the accepted dogmas. Their titles explain their contents:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|--|
| (1) | جلاء القلوب بذكر المحبوب | (An account of the Prophet and of his miracles, where free use is made of the supernatural in Islam) |
| (2) | تحفه حسن | (A controversial view of the Shia-Sunni question) |
| (3) | كلمة الحق | (A treatise on spiritual discipleship) |
| (4) | راه سنت در رد بدعت | (An exposition of orthodox Sunni doctrines) |
| (5) | نمیه دریان مسئله تصور شیخ | (A brochure on the esoteric aspect of spiritual contemplation) |

After the revolt of 1857, however, a definite change took place in Sir Syed's entire outlook. It was reflected not only in his public activities but also in his religious thought. In fact, he was convinced that without a close religious alliance between Christianity and Islam, the Indian Muslims were doomed for ever. This was necessary, he felt, not so much to remove the suspicions of the British rulers towards the Muslims as to inculcate in the latter that spirit of loyalty without which, according to him, no progress was possible. Hence, soon after the suppression of the revolt, he began to challenge all those traditions and practices which kept the two peoples apart. For instance,

he denounced the doctrines of *naskh*¹ and maintained that there had been no verbal interpolation in the Christian scriptures. The Bible and the *Enjeel*² were really one and the same. This was no ordinary contention; against it his many enemies could quote such authentic Quranic texts as "O true believer! Take not the Jews or Christians for friends"³ and "O ye who have received the Scriptures, why do you clothe truth with vanity and knowingly conceal the truth".⁴ Moreover, the Ulama did not accept the Christian doctrine of crucifixion; according to them Christ was not crucified but bodily transferred by the angels to heaven.⁵ For these and other reasons the Muslims could never accept the British as true followers of Hazarat Eisa of the Quran;⁶ they were false not only to the Muslims but also to Christ, their own Prophet—that was the contention of the Ulama.

Difficult though the task was, Sir Syed lost no time in trying to bring about a better religious understanding between the two peoples. For this purpose he wrote his famous, تبين الكلام or commentaries on the Old and New Testaments.⁷ This was his first major contribution to religious controversy. The book attempted to emphasise points of similarity between the two religions and emphasised the fundamental unity that ran through the two faiths. This was, however, no emotional outburst on the Syed's part; it was a first-class piece of research work. The material unearthed was immense; its treatment, masterly. In

¹ The doctrine of *naskh* نسخ or the revocation of one divine commandment by another, was first popularised by the two great Muslim theologians, Fakhruddin Razi and Ismail Bukhari.

² The Quranic name for the Christian Holy Book.

³ The Quran, V, 56.

⁴ Ibid., III, 64.

⁵ "God said, O Jesus! Verily I will cause thee to die and I will take thee unto me." (III, 48) Hence, according to the Ulama's established interpretations, the Jews could not deprive Jesus of life. "They slew him not, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness." (IV, 156) The most accepted narration of this event is by Alkalby, who quotes Abi Salah, who quotes Abi Abbas; then there were, though slightly varying from the former, the learned narrations of Wahab and Moqated.

⁶ See E. Rehazsck's article on "The Life of Jesus: According to the Quran and the Muslim Tradition" in the *Calcutta Review*, 1881, 16-34.

⁷ Sir Syed: *Akheri Mazameen* (Urdu Text), 29.

fact, in its preparation, Sir Syed spared no pains. He not only made a comparative study of the Old and New Testaments and the various commentaries on the Quran, but also went through all the important religious histories of Christianity and Islam. He also read a great deal on the rise and growth of various sects in both the faiths. He even collected material about the Unitarian movement, European as well as American; as also treatises by scientific rationalist thinkers. His main purpose in writing this book was, as I have explained earlier, to impress upon both Muslims and Christians the enlightened concordance that existed between their respective faiths. According to him, Islam and Christianity were two phases of the same ideal; there was nothing contradictory in the impact that either had left on the human mind. To this belief he stuck to the last. Just a few months before his death he wrote: "Though there is a difference in religious beliefs between the Christians and the Muslims, it cannot be proved by history that there has been any antagonism between them ever since the early days."

Nevertheless, Sir Syed realised that only theorising, however important, could not advance his cause; he needed something more to demonstrate to his people its practical urgency. He, therefore, began to advocate that the Muslims should remove all those social barriers which made mutual contacts between them and the British difficult and unpleasant. From his personal experience he knew that many orthodox Muslims considered it almost a sin to share a meal with Europeans; a good many even looked down upon such a practice as spiritual pollution. Sir Syed started breaking this "unnatural" barrier as a first step towards the cementing of Anglo-Muslim friendship. He openly attended official parties and freely mixed with British officers and their wives. At once rumours spread that Sir Syed drank wines and spirits and ate pig's meat; he was publicly damned. Unmindful of these attacks, he went ahead and invited British officers to his house. This was too much for the Ulama. They denounced him as *munafiq* and wrote treatises against his heretic behaviour. When the attacks became overwhelming, Sir Syed issued a rejoinder. It was in the form of a small book entitled, *رسالہ در طعام اہل کتاب* (Journal on Dining with People of the Book). In this he not only justified dining with Christians on theoretical grounds but also explained how essen-

tial it was for Muslims to discard all old inhibitions and try and establish a closer relationship with the British.

Unfortunately, just as he was beginning to achieve some success in his efforts to win over the Muslims to the British side, there appeared in England a book against Muhammad which shocked literate Muslims throughout India. Particularly in North India the reaction was sharp as its author happened to be a Lt.-Governor and a great friend of Sir Syed. To make matters worse, the missionaries published several extracts from the book in Urdu translation and gave them wide publicity among Indian Muslims. Some missionaries even hoped that it would do an irreparable damage to Islam. The book was Sir William Muir's *Life of Muhammad*.⁸ In it the author had not only attempted to discredit the whole divine fabric of Islam but also presented the Prophet as a man of very low character, addicted to some of the worst human vices.

Sir Syed was naturally pained and upset; he realised the tremendous harm that the book did to his cause. On no account, however, was he prepared to abandon the pursuit of reconciliation between the rulers and the ruled; the greater the obstacles in his path the more resolute became his will. Consequently, in the course of his visit to London, he busied himself with gathering as much material as he could get for refuting Muir's charges. He worked, despite his advanced age, day after day, at the British Museum and the India Office; he spent large sums on getting several European works on Islam translated. From the Middle East he ordered as many relevant books as he could obtain. The result of all these efforts was his *خطبات احمدیه* or "Addresses on the Life of Muhammad". In this work he answered every one of Muir's charges. Mostly he relied on European documents and freely quoted European authors. He refrained from indulging in any kind of vilification of Christianity. Naturally, the dignity and soberiety of his rejoinder proved most effective. When it appeared in India it gladdened the hearts of his numerous friends. As for his enemies, their mouths were shut.

⁸ See Sir William Muir: *The Life of Muhammad*, III, 226-31; 242-43; IV, 158-64; 302-24.

While in England, Sir Syed also reflected a great deal on the question of eradicating some of the evil practices and habits prevalent among the Muslims; in this he drew much inspiration from the work done in Britain by Steele and Addison. On his return to India, therefore, as we have seen in a previous chapter, Sir Syed started the journal, *Tahzibul Akhlaq*. This was perhaps one of his most potent instruments for bringing about religious and social reforms among the Muslims. Through it, he and his colleagues propagated, among other things,

- (1) a rational approach to Islam;
- (2) a readjustment of Islamic traditions and customs in accordance with the changing times;
- (3) an active interest in the history and literature of Islam;
- (4) a new approach to life, Islamic in its roots, but adjustable with modern requirements; and
- (5) a better understanding of the Christians and their mode of living.

On the above subjects, heated discussions took place and many controversies arose; on some of them even heretical ideas were expressed, opening a new sphere of intellectual freedom. These controversies included such matters as religion in relation to this world; life after death; the significance of Adam; freedom of thought and action in Islam; Islamic conventions and their ultimate sanction; changes in Muslim outlook; the adaptability of Islam to changing times; Mehdism; magic and sorcery; the conflict between a *hadith* and its interpretations; adoration of the Prophet; God worship and religious education; the use of myths in *hadith* and *tasfir*. There were also new interpretations, more in tune with modern times, of many *suras* from the Quran, particularly those concerning *genii* (جن) ; elephant (فيل) ; and the heavens (سموان).

Such a development, however desirable from an intellectual point of view, was too much for the Ulama. They could no longer tolerate Sir Syed and his men in the Islamic fold. Consequently, no fewer than sixty maulvis, kazis and muftis, severally and collectively, issued *fatwas* against the Syed and pronounced him the most hateful of *kafirs*. Further, one of the maulvis (Ali Baksh Khan) specially went to Mecca and obtained from the

leading exponents of the "Four Schools"⁹ a document, sanctified by their signatures and seals, declaring Sir Syed as a *dajjal* (an arch devil), of whose evil appearance Muslims throughout the world had to be warned. The M.A.O. College was condemned as the devil's seminary, while Sir Syed was assigned a special place in hell. Once or twice he was even threatened with assassination.

Undaunted, Sir Syed went ahead with his plans. He was determined to bring the Muslims and the British together and no amount of threats could make him give up his mission. In this he received much help, both financial and literary, from Mohsinul Mulk, who had not only a big heart but also a brilliant pen. Of course, he did not agree with all of Sir Syed's religious interpretations—some of them even frightened him—but he was in complete agreement with Sir Syed's aim: to popularise English education among the Muslims and bring them closer to the British. Besides, due to his compromising attitude and amenable nature, he was able to win over many Ulama to the Aligarh school. He convinced a number of them that, for Islam to thrive in the modern age, it must be rid of superstitions, harmful rituals and idolatrous customs.

Apart from Sir Syed's personality, the rising generation of English-educated Muslims were kept within the new fold by the writings of Chiragh Ali and Ameer Ali. The former was a great friend of Sir Syed and often contributed to the *Tahzibul Akhlaq*; the latter took no interest in the Aligarh movement. Both, however, like Sir Syed, were rationalists in religion, called themselves *mutazila* and stood, broadly speaking, for the same values and reforms in Islam as Sir Syed.

Chiragh Ali's main concern was to foil the efforts of the Christian missionaries and prevent Muslim society from disintegrating. He was afraid that the missionaries might more easily succeed with the English-educated Muslims, who were already alienated because of the unimaginative and obstinate attitude of the Ulama. Chiragh Ali, therefore, wrote mostly in English with an eye on the new generation. He maintained that Islam, as its very name suggested, stood for peace. There was nothing

⁹ The Four Schools of the Sunni sect in Islam called (1) Hanafi; (2) Sha'afie; (3) Maliki; (4) Hanbali.

aggressive about it; even the *jihads* were defensive wars.¹⁰ All talk of "Quran or the sword" was false, meant only to malign Islam, for has not the Holy Book declared: لا إكراه في الدين (There is no compulsion in religion). He also gave brilliant expositions of Islam's efforts in abolishing slavery, in raising the level of the common man, and in enriching the arts and sciences.

But Chiragh Ali's outstanding achievement was his work entitled, *The Proposed Political, Legal and Social Reforms in the Ottoman Empire and other Muhammadan States*. In it he pleaded for the separation of religion and society, a concept alien to the very character of Islam so that he could succeed in bringing about that *rapprochement* between the Europeans and the Muslims towards which he and Sir Syed, among others, were striving. His defence for this bold stand was explained by him in the preface to the book: "I have endeavoured to show in this book that Muhammadanism as taught by Muhammad, the Arabian Prophet, possesses sufficient elasticity to enable it to adapt itself to the social and political revolutions going on around it."¹¹ He quoted one verse after another from the Holy Book to prove that "The Quran or the teachings of Muhammad are neither barriers to spiritual development or free thinking on the part of Muhammadans, nor an obstacle to innovation in any sphere of life, whether political, social, intellectual or moral."¹² Nay, Chiragh Ali even suggested that too much sanctity should not be attached to the Prophet, his sayings and practices, for after all "he was merely a man". In purely religious matters his instructions must be followed "but when he ventured his opinion in other matters he was only a man."¹³ From this, the rest followed, till the conclusion that Muhammad "never combined the Church and State into one"; therefore there should be no impediment in the path of those who wanted to modernise Islam and to take their full share in the new life

¹⁰ Chiragh Ali: "A Critical Exposition of the Popular Jihad", 16-34, 91-114, 116-61.

¹¹ Chiragh Ali: *The Proposed Political, Legal and Social Reforms in the Ottoman Empire and other Muhammadan States*, ii.

¹² Ibid., xxxv-vi.

¹³ Ibid., 3-28.

under the British. This thesis had some impact on the English-educated Muslims because it made their tasks of adjustment much easier.

Ameer Ali's contributions to modern Islamic thought were much more positive, perhaps because he had no immediate mission to fulfil. Unlike Sir Syed and his colleagues, he was not content to be merely defensive, trying to prove that Islam was a respectable and progressive religion. He maintained that it was the finest of all religions and Muhammad the greatest of all Prophets. In his opinion, not only the Hindus and other "non-believers" were, from the religious point of view, inferior to the Muslims, but also the Jews and Christians. He explained this at length in his introduction to *The Spirit of Islam*, a masterpiece of Islamic polemics, written in beautiful English. The book attracted considerable attention in Europe, though it was "primarily intended for the Indian Muslims".¹⁴

Ameer Ali's Islam, however, had little to do with the Islam as practised by Indian Muslims; in fact, he discarded as un-Islamic all that sounded irrational and impractical in Islam.¹⁵ But he was not satisfied with a mere restatement of Islamic fundamentals; he also eulogised in glowing terms the achievements of the Saracens in the arts and letters.¹⁶ His idea was not only to inspire among the younger Muslim generation a new loyalty to their faith but also to make them proud of their great and glorious past. For this, he was prepared to make the necessary changes in Islam, justifying his attitude on the doctrine of *ijtihad*. As the world progressed, so must Islamic institutions; so must Islamic ideas, Islamic modes of living, Islamic laws and their interpretation. All this, he observed,

¹⁴ Ameer Ali: *The Spirit of Islam*. Also see his *A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammad*, 1-25; 171-96; 197-16; 318-46.

¹⁵ As the distinguished scholar, D. B. Macdonald puts it: "The Syed is at the stage of explaining this away, and it is fair to say that he does it at the expense of much hardy ingenuous ingenuity and a good deal of *suppressio veri*." (See the *International Review of Missions*, April 1913).

¹⁶ In his introduction to *A Short History of the Saracens*, Ameer Ali regretted that "in the West a knowledge of their history should be more or less confined to specialists; whilst in India, a country which was at one time peculiarly subject to the influence of their civilisation, it should be almost unknown."

was possible within the Islamic framework and would be in accordance with the teachings of Muhammad.

But Ameer Ali was essentially a thinker, or rather a scholar, more interested in expounding his views than in their implementation. Sir Syed, on the other hand, said only so much as the situation demanded and saw to it that what he said was acted upon. In consequence, even on religious matters, Sir Syed's impact was greater than Ameer Ali's. Besides, Sir Syed advocated only such religious reforms as were absolutely necessary for his task. He was quite happy to adopt a *laissez-faire* policy in those matters which did not obstruct his path. That was why this radical reformer, while demanding almost sweeping changes in some fields, at the same time defended some of the most out-moded Muslim institutions. Take, for instance, his defence of *pardah*. This is what he wrote about it only a couple of years before his death: "People may think that I am of the 'new fashion' . . . but my mind is essentially orthodox. . . . I consider the *pardah* system, prevalent among the Muslim women, as extremely good." He was so adamant about this that he refused even to discuss whether the Quran approved of it or not; nor was he much impressed by the argument of some of the English-educated Muslims that the abolition of *pardah* would facilitate social intercourse between the English and the Muslims. "First let you [the men]," he wrote, "be able to mix with the English; then think of your womenfolk," quoting a Persian couplet in support of his plea:

توکار زمین رانکو ساختی که با آسمان نیز پرداختی

However, there can be no two opinions about Sir Syed's deep study of Muslim theology or about his profound scholarship. His numerous essays and lectures, more particularly his famous *Tafseer*, show what versatility he possessed, and how rational was his outlook.

In all his works, the goal remained the same; even in *Tafseer*—his commentary on the Quran—he tried to emphasise the need and urgency of forging better relationships between the Christians and the Muslims and of presenting Islam as a religious system which was not in conflict with Western ideas.

To bring home this message to his people, Sir Syed stressed the part that logic or nature or inanimate existence played in life. Everything had to be tested, he said, with the touchstone of reason; what the mind could not accept had to be discarded. For this reason, he laid exclusive stress on the words of the Quran and rejected "everything else"—*hadith*, *fiqah* and *taqlid*—as "subsidiary and of secondary importance".¹⁷ "The modern independent individual" had no need for worn-out traditions and out-of-date doctrines; his only guide must be the Quran which was to be interpreted, not on the principles of *ilmul kalam* or on those generally accepted by *mufasssirs* and *mujtahids* but in accordance with modern requirements. He encouraged independent judgement even while dealing with inspired utterances.¹⁸ Faith had to be fortified by logic. Sir Syed's views naturally shocked many devout Muslims, including some of his best friends.¹⁹

For instance, he rejected the unnatural allusions in the Quran and said the "word of God" could only be interpreted by the "work of God". Consequently, "miracles", being unnatural phenomena, were only allegorical; so were the graphic descriptions of *Mairaj* (the celestial journey of the Prophet).²⁰ From the same standpoint, he condemned aggressive wars, slavery and

¹⁷ See Sir Syed's "Essay on the Muhammadan Theological Literature".

¹⁸ Weitbrecht thus summarises Sir Syed's religious philosophy: "But his thought (system we cannot call it) is more influenced by the conception of *conscience* and *nature*. Conscience, he says, is the condition of man's character which results from training and reflection. It may rightly be called his true guide and his real prophet. Still, it is liable to mutability, and needs to be corrected from time to time by historic prophets. To test a prophet we must compare the principles of his teachings with the laws of nature. If it agrees with these we are to accept it and he quotes with approval the remark of a French writer, that Islam, which lays no claim to miraculous powers on the part of the founder, is the truly rationalistic religion." (See Weitbrecht's *Indian Islam and Modern Thought*, 5. Also see Sir Syed's *Tafseer*, I, 238).

¹⁹ See Shibli: *Maqalati-Shibli* (Urdu text), 64. Also see Hali's critical review of Sir Syed's *Tafseer* in which the former discusses at length the opposition to the latter's religious views. (*Hayat-e-Javeed*, Appendix V).

²⁰ See Sir Syed's "Essay on Shakki-Sardar and Meraaj, that is, the splitting [open] of the Chest of Muhammad and his Night Journey".

subjugation of women;²¹ though he upheld the institutions of polygamy and divorce which he found in harmony with natural laws. Even on such accepted fundamentals of Islam as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and *zakat* or charity, he had something new to say; while on questions relating to a future life, particularly in regard to the existence and nature of the soul, rewards and punishments, paradise and hell, his interpretations were different from the accepted ones.²² Besides, he contended that passages in the Quran having an appeal to the sensuous instincts of man were just allegorical allusions to high spiritual truths. Finally, he came out openly in favour of "taking interest",²³ particularly in commercial transactions, a view in sharp contradiction to that held by practically all leading Muslim divines.

No wonder then that the Ulama denounced Sir Syed as a heretic. There is little doubt, from a strictly religious point of view, that some of his interpretations bore the taint of heresy. Apart from his critics, even such close friends of his as Mohsinul Mulk and Shibli disagreed with him. But they had too great a respect for him and his work to criticise him publicly or to denounce him openly.

Sir Syed also drew sharp strictures from Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, the greatest Islamic thinker of the nineteenth century, whose name is even today held in the highest esteem in Muslim religious circles all the world over. Al-Afghani, the pioneer of the pan-Islamic movement, had travelled widely both in Asia and Europe; he knew many European languages and was well versed in both modern religious thought and political development.²⁴ He was no old-fashioned *alim* but a shrewd judge of the times

²¹ See, for instance, his brilliant defence of جنگ بدر especially while commenting on the text يثْلُوكَ عَنْ الْإِنْقَال in his *Tafseer* (Urdu text), IV, 1-21.

²² See, for instance, Sir Syed's commentary on the Quranic text; يَنْفَعُ فِي الطُّور in which he refuses to accept the literal meaning and explains the whole episode as being merely allegorical. (*Tafseer*, III, 52-63.)

²³ See Sir Syed's commentary on the Quranic text: الله البيع وحرم الربوا in his *Tafseer* (Urdu text), I, 298-313.

²⁴ Hans Kohn describes "the great Jemal ud-Din al-Afghani" as "the awakener of all modern political consciousness in Islam, who has left traces of his influence in almost all Eastern countries." (Hans Kohn: *A History of Nationalism in the East*, 179.

he lived in. Al-Afghani hated the British because he considered them as the chief cause of Islam's downfall. Naturally, there was little love between him and Sir Syed, whom he accused of "treason to his religion and his country".²⁵ The two remained poles apart in their approaches to the problems of their co-religionists.

Al-Afghani pooh-poohed Sir Syed's "naturalism" which he said was a poor imitation of the basic concept of the materialists in Europe. Like them he (Sir Syed) believed that Europe's progress was due only to her sciences and arts, and, therefore, he pleaded with the Muslims in India to abandon their own heritage and become slaves of the British culture. "To exhibit the ways of nature," wrote Al-Afghani, "he has forged a falsehood that he attributes to God."

Besides this, according to Al-Afghani, Sir Syed was not only a traitor to his religion; he was also a traitor to his country. In consequence, pointed out Al-Afghani, he was much inferior to even the European materialist who, though "abandoning religion, preserves at the same time the love of his country". Sir Syed, on the other hand, worked among the Muslims not only for the elimination of "their religious fervour" but also of "their patriotic zeal". For this purpose, alleged Al-Afghani, he not only made the Muslims servile slaves of the British but also "sowed division between the Hindus and the Muslims", thus strengthening the foreign hold on India.²⁶ He accused Sir Syed and his followers of working "like an army for the English Government in India, drawing out swords to cut the throats of their own co-religionists; but having done that they cried out to the dead that they had been killed for their own good, out of compassion and pity, and for their own betterment." For the English,

²⁵ See al-Afghani's article in the Arabic newspaper, *al-'Urwal al-Wuthqa* of Cairo, published in its issue of August 28, 1884.

²⁶ According to Al-Afghani's Urdu biographer "though the Shaikh was mostly engaged in the service of Islam, so far as India was concerned he made no distinction between the Hindus and Muslims. His message was always given to both the communities He realised that the destiny of India was linked with the awakening and progress of both Hindus and Muslims. In several of his articles in *al-'Urwal al-Wuthqa* he emphasised this point." (Kazi Muhammad Abdul Ghaffar: *Asare Jemaluddin al-Afghani*, Urdu text, 120-55).

Al-Afghani said, there could not have been a better or more successful way of "attaining their aim and of causing the enfeeblement of Islam and the Muslims".

Though Sir Syed was usually not upset by such attacks, Al-Afghani's strictures came as a cruel blow to him. And still these did not unnerve him. He was determined to make the position of the Muslims safe and secure under the British and, despite all obstacles, he remained firm in his endeavour. Gradually, success came to him. He was able to develop the M.A.O. College into a full-fledged educational centre, to which well-to-do Muslim students from all over India flocked;²⁷ through his literary and other public activities, he spread Western ideas, as he understood them, among the Muslims. Besides, most of his graduates were being absorbed into lucrative positions by the Government,²⁸ while social intercourse between Muslims and Europeans had begun to improve. When his son, Syed Mahmud, returned to India after having been called to the Bar, Sir Syed organised a big dinner to welcome him, to which an equal number of Muslims and Europeans were invited. The occasion was much publicised and hailed as the triumph of mutual trust and goodwill between the two peoples.²⁹

The new bonds, thus forged, were further strengthened in many other ways. Through Beck and other English professors, the students were brought under Western influence; while Sir Syed, by his dinners and parties, managed to keep the British bureaucrats well disposed towards the Muslims. So far was he able to succeed in this that, when Edward Carpenter, one of the early British socialists, visited India in 1890 he found in Aligarh "a striking example of a *rapprochement* taking place between the rulers and the ruled". "It is the only place in India", he wrote, "which I have visited where I have noticed anything like a cordial feeling existing between the two sections."³⁰

This "cordial feeling", however, was not as deep as one would have imagined. In fact, despite Sir Syed's strenuous

²⁷ See *Tarikhe Madrasat al-Ulume Musalman* (Urdu text).

²⁸ See Theodore Morison's *History of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh*, 68-73.

²⁹ For an account of the dinner and the speeches made on the occasion, see the *Pioneer*, January 11, 1877.

³⁰ Edward Carpenter: *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*, 276.

efforts for a real union of hearts, there was something superficial or rather showy about the whole affair. The realisation of this came painfully to him when, during the last years of his life, he saw how shabbily the European judges treated his son, Syed Mahmud, who, in disgust, resigned from the Bench of the Allahabad High Court.³¹

Sir Syed's frustration then was so great that he admitted that "in my opinion the time has not come, and perhaps will never come, when our European friends, conquerors of this country, and naturally proud of their conquest, will condescend to sit at the same table with a conquered and consequently hated Indian, despite his desire to perform with equal responsibility and honour the duties of a high position. . . . It is no secret that the treatment which the English accord to their own countrymen and that which they accord to Indians is as different as black is from white. People may brag and contend that it was not so but the wise alone know the truth."³² This was in 1894, only four years before his death.

It is difficult to give, in concrete terms, an estimate of Sir Syed's achievements in bringing about religious and social reforms. Perhaps the effect of his efforts was more felt in the long run than immediately. Certainly he made little or no use, if the questions of "innoculation" and "the office of kazis" are excluded, of the legislative machinery to introduce any such changes. But the revolution in ideas, thanks to his voluminous literary productions, was well on its way. This in turn had created the necessary atmosphere for the many religious and social reforms which some of his young followers undertook in earnest. To some of the reforms advocated by these people even Sir Syed, had he lived, would have objected. But that is not the point. He had generated among the Muslims not only new ideas but also new desires and urges, with the result that a whole new generation became enthused with them.

Even during Sir Syed's lifetime this new generation was beginning to have ideas of their own about religious and social

³¹ See Sir Syed's comments in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, November 14, 1893.

³² The full text of Sir Syed's editorial, in English translation, was given by the *Bengalee*, November 18, 1893.

reforms among the Muslims. Then they were too small and weak to make their voice heard. Besides, Sir Syed's personality so dominated every phase of the community's life that they could not challenge him or project their points of view. One Mustafa Khan, an Aligarh graduate, made a rather feeble attempt to give expression to the feelings of the educated Muslims of his age and class on the question of reforms, but it produced hardly any immediate impact.

In his *An Apology for the New Light*, published in 1891, Mustafa Khan complained that the new generation of English-educated Muslims, because of the hostile social environment around them, "feel isolated"; and that "unsympathetic words and looks dog their steps". To defeat their pessimism and frustration, he suggested:

- (1) the adoption (after making certain necessary variations) of English dress and other outward accomplishments of a European civilisation;
- (2) some urgently needed changes in "the existing mode of religious thought"; and
- (3) introduction of "certain social reforms".³³

For this purpose, Mustafa Khan wanted the new class of Muslims to make "European civilisation their model". Neither Sir Syed nor any of his colleagues were prepared for such radicalism. In fact, Sir Syed always felt proud of his fez cap!

However, great changes were, no doubt, taking place among the Ulama who, conscious of their defeat at Sir Syed's hand, were anxious to bring their own order in line with modern times. Of course, they were not prepared to compromise on religious principles; but in worldly matters they were willing to make the necessary readjustments. In this Shibli played a most prominent part. He was a colleague of Sir Syed, but much younger than him. As Professor of Persian at the M.A.O. Col-

³³ Mustafa Khan: *An Apology for the New Light*, 2 (foot-note). "The 'New Light' in some respects appear to me to be as much as the Britons were immediately after the Romans had left them to themselves—'between the barbarians and the deep sea'—wedged between Europeans and the majority of their own co-religionists, their condition is by no means enviable." (Ibid., 9).

lege he was constantly in touch with not only Sir Syed but also with European intellectuals such as Beck, Morison and Arnold. Consequently, he kept himself abreast with modern ideas. He admired many things in European civilisation and was convinced that Islam and the Muslims must be reorganised so as to make them fit in the new scheme of things. He approved of English education and was in favour of modernising certain social institutions. But his devotion to Islam was too great to make him acquiesce in many of Sir Syed's "innovations" which he found distinctly distasteful. Neither was he prepared to abandon all the orthodox traditions or to write off the Ulama, whom he considered an essential part of Islam. Moreover, while Sir Syed was interested in Westernising Islam, Shibli's main concern was to measure Western ideas and values by the Islamic yardstick. But, like Sir Syed, he also tried to work out the points of similarity between the two rather than emphasise their conflicting aspects. Again, to Sir Syed religion was the spiritual and moral expression of reason; but to Shibli, reason was at best the handmaid of religion. The distinction may be a little subtle but it was nonetheless deep. In any event, it influenced considerably the respective outlooks of the two leaders, particularly in regard to religious and social reforms.

Shibli had a passion for Islam, the whole of Islam. He knew everything that could be known about it—its precepts and practices, its saints and teachers, its heroes and history, its arts and sciences, its culture and civilisation. In all of them he found so much of good that he was not prepared to discard any part of it lightly. He did not mind borrowing European ideas and institutions but only if these were absolutely essential for the regeneration of Islam. This is evident not only from his public activities but also from the numerous works that he produced, in all of which, while the superfluous and the ridiculous were discarded, all the accepted essentials of the faith were not only preserved but fully respected.

In this task Shibli received, especially after Sir Syed's death, much help from Hali and Mohsinul Mulk. Like him, Hali also took pride in glorifying the Islamic past; while Mohsinul Mulk believed that without the support of the Ulama, and the many

orthodox institutions that they represented, the general mass of Muslims could not be brought within the new fold.³⁴

Towards this end, late in 1894, the Nadwat-al Ulama or Synod of Muslim Divines was founded. Its inaugural meeting was held at Kanpur under the management of one Hafiz Ebrahim Bukhsh, proprietor of the Madrasa-i-Faiz-i-Am. It was attended by about three hundred moulvis, representing the various Islamic sects. The move was warmly welcomed by Mohsinul Mulk at the Muhammadan Educational Conference. He described it as "one of the hopeful signs of the time". He was glad that the Ulama "were leaving those old and superannuated methods which were entirely out of harmony with the spirit of the modern world". This was evident from the many resolutions passed by the Ulama at their meeting. Sir Syed could not have wished them to do any better. In support of his contention, Mohsinul Mulk read quotation after quotation from the speeches delivered at the previous conferences and emphasised that Sir Syed had been saying the same things for the past twenty-five years. This harmony in views between the followers of Sir Syed and the Ulama, though brought about after so much misunderstanding and conflict, was a great step forward; perhaps it was "the most important event in the recent history of the Indian Musalmans".³⁵

The reasons for making such a bold claim were obvious, said Mohsinul Mulk. It was only with the active cooperation of these learned men who possessed the confidence and respect of the vast masses of the population "that any kind of religious and social reforms, urgently needed to grapple with the new situation, could be effectively introduced. So long as these men held themselves aloof, the task was necessarily rendered difficult." "But now," continued Mohsinul Mulk, "fortunately for us, these worthy guides have at last shaken off their apathy." They had pledged themselves "to do something for themselves"

³⁴ See Shibli's address to the inaugural session of the Nadwat-al Ulama on April 12, 1895, for an appreciation of the vital role of Ulama in Muslim society. (*Resa'il-i-Shibli*, Urdu text, 3-8).

³⁵ *Khulasa-i-Karwa-e-Yaz deh Saleh* (Proceedings of the Muhammadan Educational Conference from 1886 to 1896) compiled by Mehdi Ali Khan (Urdu text), 60-62. Also see Syed Mahmood's speech on the occasion. (*Ibid.*, 62-64).

and this, according to Mohsinul Mulk, when viewed in the light of "the general conservatism of the moulvis", was a great undertaking, deserving "the earnest support of the Indian Musalmans".³⁶

The next meeting of the Nadwat-al Ulama, which was much more representative than the previous one, was held at Lucknow on April 12, 13 and 14, 1895. It was attended, among others, by such distinguished Muslim divines as Maulana Shah Muhammad Husain of Allahabad, Maulana Shah Muhammad Amanatullah of Ghazipur, Maulana Shah Muhammad Suleiman of Foolwari Sharif, Maulana Abu Muhammad Abdul Haq of Delhi, and Maulana Abu Muhammad Ibrahim of Arrah. Shibli was the driving force of the conference. For hours together the delegates discussed the question of questions: How, consistent with their religious outlook, could they equip themselves with the knowledge that European science and education provided? For the general body of Muslims, they agreed that a liberal education on occidental lines was "a growing necessity"; but they also emphasised the fruitfulness of "sound classical education in Arabic and Persian and in those branches of the oriental lore wherein are treasured the rich stores of the Muslim past".³⁷ For the Ulama even this was quite a bold step; to press for more would have been foolhardiness.

Thereafter, year after year, the Ulama met in conference and tried to dilute their orthodoxy but only to the extent that such dilution did not run counter to their Islamic heritage. They did not mind modern education, but only so long as it did not weaken the religious foundation of Islam. Towards the British rulers they gave up their hostility; in fact they were now anxious to have official support for their movement. The British, for their part, were prepared not to interfere with their movement, provided it became loyal. This was obvious when, at the opening ceremony of the Darul Uloom (Institution of Learning) held at Lucknow on November 2, 1898, many high-ranking European officers, including the Commissioner and the

³⁶ *The Moslem Chronicle*, March 7, 1895. The newspaper described the Nadwat-al Ulama as "a conference of Maulvis and Muhaddiseen [doctors of law] hitherto the most obstinate opponents of English education."

³⁷ See Saksena: *A History of Urdu Literature*, 190-91.

Deputy-Commissioner, personally wished the leaders of the Nadwat-al Ulama all success in their new venture, which aimed at training young Muslims on the new lines in theology and other forms of religious learning.³⁸

As the Nadwat-al Ulama progressed, it widened its scope and embraced, among other things, the following objects:

- (1) the advancement and reform of *maktabs* in particular and that of Arabic learning in general;
- (2) the suppression of sectional quarrels, more especially between the *Al-hadith*³⁹ and the *Sunnat-al Jama'at*;⁴⁰
- (3) social reforms; and
- (4) the pursuit of the spiritual welfare of the Muslims and the spread of Islam through *tableegh*.⁴¹

In the Darul Ulum, preachers were trained to carry out these objects and were sent to different parts of India to do "this missionary work". Through *Al-Nadwa*, their monthly organ, attempts were made to impress upon the younger generation the essential harmony between Islamic thought and modern science. Then there was the orphanage at Kanpur, where young Muslim orphans were brought up as zealous missionaries and sent to different parts of India. All these efforts helped the Ulama to retain their hold on the Muslims. The compromise they made hardly aided the new progressive trends in Islam; but their new approach certainly gave them a new lease of life.

In this connection, reference must also be made to the publication of a remarkable book which considerably heartened both Shibli and his clerical friends as also Sir Syed and his group. It was Arnold's *Preachings of Islam*. The book, as its sub-title suggested, was: "A history of the propagation of the Muslim faith". Sir Syed was pleased with it because it tried to prove his own contention that there was nothing illiberal or brutish about Islam.⁴² Shibli and the new band of Ulama, on

³⁸ *The Moslem Chronicle*, November 12, 1898.

³⁹ The Indian followers of the Arab reformer, Abdul Wahhab.

⁴⁰ The orthodox Sunnis, who are opposed to any radical change in Islam.

⁴¹ Propagation of Islam with a view to conversion.

⁴² Sir Syed was so overjoyed at the publication of this work that he wanted to present a copy of it as a gift to every educated young Muslim. (Sir Syed: *Khutoot*, Urdu text, 311).

the other hand, were happy because it emphasised the role of the Muslim saints in the propagation of their faith. As Arnold explained:

Thus, from its very inception, Islam has been a missionary religion, both in theory and in practice, for the life of Muhammad exemplifies the same teaching and the Prophet himself stands at the head of a long series of Muslim missionaries who have won an entrance for their faith into the hearts of unbelievers. Moreover, it is not in the cruelties of the persecutor or the fury of the fanatic that we should look for the evidence of the missionary spirit of Islam, any more than in the exploits of that mythical personage, the Muslim warrior with sword in one hand and Quran in the other—but in the quiet, unobtrusive labours of the preacher and the trader who have carried their faith into every quarter of the globe.

Then follows, in justification of this, a first-rate research work on the activities of the Muslim missionaries in various parts of the world.⁴³ Little wonder then that such a book, written by a great European scholar, should have caused so much of excitement and brought about such a sense of fulfilment among the Muslims in India.

However, conflicts often arose between the Ulama and the leaders of the Aligarh movement, particularly on the question of social and religious reforms. But somehow these were bridged either by an attitude of give-and-take on either side or by avoiding unnecessary controversies. Not seldom were necessity and urgency pleaded for these readjustments. The writings of this period are full of hackneyed, classical arguments for producing precisely such an effect on the Muslim mind.

For instance, this Persian couplet, زمانه باتونه سازد تو بازمانه بساز (If the world cannot be with you, you be with the world); or the Arabic proverb, درمع الدهركيف مادار (If the world cannot be with you, you be with the world). Still more popular was the Quranic text:

ان الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا وما بانفسهم

⁴³ T. W. Arnold: *The Preaching of Islam*, 4. See especially the chapter on "The Spread of Islam in India", 208-41.

(Verily God never changes the condition of a community unless and until it changes its own condition), which Hali, in order to make its appeal more popular and effective, had rendered in a beautiful Urdu couplet:

خدا نے آج تک اس قوم کی حالت نہیں بدلی
نہ ہو جسکو خیال آپ اپنی حالت کی بدلنے کا

Hence, whatever changes in the Muslim social structure became inevitable, the Aligarh leaders made them, irrespective of whether they were approved by Islamic traditions or not. For this purpose conflicts were discouraged and the virtues of compromise were extolled; moreover, unless absolutely necessary, no radical measures were ever suggested by them. Even the outlook of the most progressive was essentially narrow; their radicalism was often only skin-deep.

Again, not all among the "modernists" were satisfied with being "apologetic" or "Westernised". Some of them, despite their knowledge of English, passionately believed that the salvation of the Muslims lay in being true to their faith, and to their culture and civilisation. They talked in modern terms but only to emphasise the glorious past of Islam. "Ye, Muslims," they would shout, "where are your amiable characteristics, your excellence in every line of life, your fire of faith, your masses of wealth, your stores of knowledge, your invincible perseverance, your matchless self-help, and your rapid strides to advancement!" If only the Muslims were to emulate the qualities of their ancestors, why they would be superior to any European, even the British, they said.⁴⁴

Addressing India in anguish and anger they would ask:

Ah! land of the sun; oh! devourer of the nations; ah! robber of our virtues and merits; oh! free-booters of the Muslim caravan: Are we the descendants of the same progenitors, whose playground extended from Tartary and Zanzibar, whose triumphant marches are well known to thy Mahrattas and Rajputs and inscribed on thy mountains and rivers? . . . Is this the state of the Muslims which thou hadst been accus-

⁴⁴ See Khwaja Ziauddin's *Muhammadan India: Its Today and Tomorrow*, 9-12.

tomed to see? . . . Are we the unmistakable posterity of the same glorious generation? Ah! epidemic of neglect, ignorance and disunion, is this the fruit of our labours?⁴⁵

Such people had little in common with Sir Syed, though they never failed to acknowledge his contribution to the awakening of the Muslims. Their Islam, however, was too aggressive for Sir Syed's liking. He did not come out openly against them but he never approved of their thinking or their approach to the problems that the Muslims faced.

In the Land of the Five Rivers, these people found a fertile field; starting in a small way in 1885, they founded the Anjuman-e-Himayet-ul Islam or the Society for the Defence of Islam at Lahore and worked hard, year after year, to spread the movement to other provinces; branch associations were opened in many Indian cities and towns. However, except in Lahore, nowhere was it able to create much of an impact; there was initial enthusiasm, but it soon died. In Lahore, no doubt, it gathered great momentum; its objects, as set out in its prospectus, were:

- (a) rationally and intelligently to answer, through verbal discussion or in writing, any accusations advanced against Islam and to further its propagation;
- (b) to impart suitable and necessary education to Muslim boys and girls and save them from abjuring their own truth;
- (c) to take upon itself the maintenance and education, to the best of its ability, of Muhammadan orphans and to render all possible educational aid to poor Muslim boys and girls, so as to save them from falling into the hands of the followers of other religions;
- (d) to improve the social, moral and intellectual condition of the Muslim community and initiate measures conducive to the creation and preservation of friendly feelings and concord between the different sects of Islam; and

⁴⁵ Extract from a speech delivered by Professor Khwaja Ziauddin of the Islamia College, Lahore, on the occasion of the twelfth anniversary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam on January 30, 1897 at Lahore. (See also pp. 9-10 above.)

(e) to bring home to the Muhammadans the advantages of loyalty to the British Government.⁴⁶

It was also mentioned that "for the realisation of its objects, the Anjuman shall appoint preachers, issue a monthly magazine, establish educational institutions and orphanages and make use of other necessary means." Moreover, the Anjuman organised every year a kind of festival which was attended by thousands of Muslims from North-West India, and where not only Islamic songs were sung and poems recited but long discourses on the glorious past of Islam were delivered by eminent scholars and divines. These discourses were later published in the form of pamphlets and distributed far and wide, as also numerous other books and tracts. The Anjuman also did much to spread education among Muslims and managed, as we have seen earlier, a few schools and a college. Further, it actively took up the cause of female education and had under its management no less than nine schools for girls.

The main achievement of the Anjuman was a vigorous revival of interest among educated Muslims in their own religion. The other results of its labours have thus been summarised by a competent Christian authority:

The mosques have been repaired and efforts have not been fruitless in securing a better attendance. The boycott inaugurated against missionary work has reduced the attendance of Muslims at the chapels and schools and has no doubt closed many doors open to Christian teaching.⁴⁷

The young English-educated Muslims, however, were not much interested in either of these bodies though some of them did take advantage of the facilities provided by the Anjuman-e-Himayet-ul Islam, during its annual celebrations, to propagate their points of view. Of them, the man who later became a celebrity, but was also extremely popular then, was Iqbal whose poetic recitations were heard with the greatest attention and enthusiasm by the thousands of Muslims who used to gather there. At that time, Iqbal was Professor of English at the Islamia

⁴⁶ See Muhammad Shah Din's article, "Muhammadan Societies in the Punjab" in the *Indian Magazine*, April 1888, 186-92.

⁴⁷ *Report of the Madras Decennial Missionary Conference*, 334.

College, Lahore, and contributed, more or less regularly, to *Makhzan*, a monthly, started by his friend, (later Sir) Abdul Quadir.

In one of his early discourses published in *Makhzan* he dwelt at great length on the question of reforms in Muslim society. Holding Japan, which was then making rapid progress in every field, as the example, he impressed upon his co-religionists the necessity of concentrating on two things: education and social reform. Dealing with the question of social reform he said:

Among Muslims, social reform is really a religious problem. Islamic culture is nothing but the practical expression of the religion of Islam. Besides, no part of our life can be divorced from the impact of religious doctrines.⁴⁸

Iqbal had no doubt that, as a result of the revolutionary changes in modern times, a reconstruction of the *Shariat* had become essential. The old interpretations were good for the times for which they were meant; but, in the context of modern conditions, they were out of date. Consequently, he pointed out, Islam not only needed for its correct expression a new *ilm-al-kalam* but also a great *fakih* who could, in the light of new developments, correctly interpret Muslim law. But there was at that time little hope of the advent of such a great thinker in Islam. Hence, pointed out Iqbal, the work had to be done by the collective efforts of the whole community and spread over decades and, if need be, a century.

As for the immediate present, Iqbal suggested certain valuable reforms; for instance the proper protection of the rights of women and their education. He was opposed to the abolition of purdah, which, he said, was introduced in India on moral grounds. "Therefore, to do away with it by one stroke", he held, "will be, in my opinion, detrimental for the community." Polygamy, he thought, had outlived its utility. Similarly, he was in favour of doing away with many social customs connected with marriage. For instance, he believed that it was not practicable to act on the text: *فَانكحُوا ما طاب لكم من النساء* He was not opposed to the practice of *منگنی* (betrothal) provided it was modelled on the European pattern of courtship. In the field of education,

⁴⁸ *Makhzan*, March, 1905.

Iqbal pleaded for the popularisation of industrial education; without it, he said, there was no hope of any kind of progress among the Muslims.

Iqbal, however, did not do any practical work in this connection; he either taught at his College or else wrote stirring poems which, no doubt, considerably roused the Muslims to an appreciation of the new situation. It was left to some young Muslim graduates like Khwaja Ghulam-us-Saqlain and Niyaz Ahmed to carry out, as best as they could, the new social ideas and popularise them among the Muslims. For this purpose these men prevailed upon the organisers of the Muhammadan Educational Conference to open under its auspices a Reforms Section, which had, among other objects, the following:

- (1) to avoid every kind of waste during marriage and funeral ceremonies, particularly by avoiding expenditure on dress and jewels;
- (2) to stop giving alms to healthy, professional beggars and divert their energies to fruitful channels;
- (3) to prevent parents from marrying off their children before they reached the age of puberty; and prevent such marriages as were arranged against the wishes of the contracting parties;
- (4) to stop children being made to wear jewels and ornaments of precious metals and to see that they were not made fond of such things;
- (5) to discard all extravagances acquired in the course of adopting the modern way of living; and
- (6) to see that not a single Muslim remained unemployed and to try and ensure that each Muslim who could would employ at least one relation or friend.

Though the programme was mostly of a negative character, no one could deny that the evils to which the Reforms Section drew such pointed attention were real and needed immediate eradication.⁴⁹ Particularly during marriages and funerals the

⁴⁹ See Sultan Ahmed's articles on "Customs and their Reforms" in *Asre-Jadeed*, September, October and November, 1904. Also see editorial comments on the same in the *Times of India* (Mail Edition), January 16, 1902.

expenses that even the poorest Muslim families used to undergo were colossal; this had to be stopped if further economic ruin was not to overtake the Muslims.⁵⁰ As for the rich Muslims indulging in these extravagances, why should they not donate all such amounts, usually wasted on fun and frolic, for the betterment of their poorer brethren? Was it not more Islamic and in accordance with the behests of the Quran? The appeal had a healthy effect in certain quarters but it did not produce wide response. Among the English-educated Muslims, its effect was greater than on any other group and it was therefore mostly among them that the leaders of the Reforms Section carried on their activities.

In order to propagate these views, a new journal called *Asre-Jadeed* was started. In its pages many interesting controversies on the social problems of the Muslims were carried on. For instance, it dealt with the purdah system, religious education among the Muslims, and the best and most suitable form of marriage in modern times. But perhaps the most interesting topic ever discussed in its pages was the question of Muslim dress. The discussion was initiated by one Moulvi Hafiz Syed Sajjad Ali,⁵¹ who contended that there was no such thing as a Muslim dress and, therefore, in accordance with the changing times, Muslims should have no hesitation in wearing English suits and jackets and trousers.⁵² Sir Syed did not object and often wore an English suit with a Turkish cap on his head. He considered this combination quite Islamic because it was, during those days, much in vogue in Turkey. The consensus of opinion among the educated Muslims was in favour of this view though there were some extremists who insisted on wearing the old garb—sherwani and pyjama. Strangely enough, some

⁵⁰ See Niaz Ahmad's article on "Our New and Old Extravagances" in *Asre-Jadeed*, February, 1904.

⁵¹ This controversy, however, was much older. As early as 1890, a judge of the Nizam's High Court, Mir Iqbal Ali, had made a vigorous plea for the adoption of European dress by the Muslims in the pages of *Husn*, a Urdu magazine of repute. Ali was widely criticised for his "un-Islamic attitude" particularly by the editor of *Azad*.

⁵² *Asre-Jadeed*, July 1904. Also see an article by Munshi Jamal Ahmed, editor of *Hamdard* in *Asre-Jadeed*, April, 1904.

European officials disapproved of the Muslims, or, for that matter, of any Indian, wearing European clothes.⁵³

Of the numerous fields in which practical reforms were attempted, and to some extent successfully, mention may be made of the following social and religious customs, which, as a result of the labours of the Reforms Section, were made less expensive, more simple, and to some extent shorn of unnecessary formalism:

- (1) marriage, particularly the ceremonies of *barat*, *rukhsat* and *jahaiz*;
- (2) birth, particularly the ceremonies connected with *aquiqua*, *bismilla* and *khatna*;
- (3) funerals, particularly in regard to such customs as *nawan*, *daswan*, *chehlum* and *barsi*; and
- (4) other social and religious functions such as Id, Muharram, occasional *fatiha* parties, *mangani*, etc.

In all these customs, which were practised by rich and poor alike, the reformers demanded drastic curtailment, and pointed out how a large majority of them were performed in contravention to the tenets of Islam. Here some success was no doubt achieved, but it was clear that nothing substantial could be accomplished till the people were properly educated and made to realise the folly of their actions.

Before we close this chapter, a reference must be made to the *Qadiani* movement inaugurated by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,⁵⁴ a Punjabi moulvi, who announced one morning that his "advent in this age is not meant for the reformation of the Muhammadans only, but Almighty God has willed to bring about through me a regeneration of three great nations, viz. Hindus, Muhammadans and Christians."⁵⁵ At first he was content to be the Messiah of the Muslims and Christians but later on he declared that he was also an avatar of the Hindus. On the Hindus and Christians his influence was negligible; but on

⁵³ Of the British who ridiculed the idea of Indians wearing European dress were Lords Dufferin and Curzon. In the beginning Sir Syed had to face much difficulty in this respect. (See Hali: *Hayat-e-Javeed*, Urdu text).

⁵⁴ For a full appreciation of the Mirza's role in Muslim religious controversies of modern times, see Griswold's *Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*.

⁵⁵ *The Review of Religions*, November, 1904.

Indian Islam he did leave, in spite of his fantastic personal claims, some disturbing effect.

In his teachings there were many innovations. He tried to take a middle course between Muslim orthodoxy and European culture, making, sometimes, ridiculous readjustments. To suit his mission he even made many fundamental alterations in Islamic doctrines. He was, for instance, opposed to any kind of *jihad*; he did not approve of the cult of *ghazis*; and denied the emergence of a Mahdi who would fight violently against evil in this world. In the same vein, he said that the Quran did not uphold the immediate abolition of slavery; it must be done gradually. Similarly he favoured polygamy, purdah and *talaq* (divorce), maintaining that they were essential for preserving social equilibrium.

The Mirza's pretensions gave rise to violent controversies in Muslim religious circles.⁵⁶ From all over the Muslim world came denunciations and damnations couched in the strongest terms. The Mirza was called *kafir* (unbeliever), *dajjal* (anti-Christ), *mulhid* (heretic), *murtadd* (apostate), *kazzab* (liar), *daghabaz* (deceitful) etc., and on one occasion even the Punjab Government asked him to refrain from indulging in dangerous prophesies. He meekly submitted to the order.⁵⁷

But despite the many limitations from which he suffered, the Mirza went ahead with his mission, and brought within his fold hundreds of Muslims, fired with a new enthusiasm. To propagate his creed he founded a high school and a few other institutions, published two papers, *Al-Hakam* (in Urdu) and *Review of Religions* (in English), besides writing numerous tracts, open letters, challenges, etc. However, his contribution both to religious thought and to reforms was purely negative; it only intensified fanaticism among Muslims and showed what violent opposition such tampering with Islamic fundamentals could cause. He attempted to introduce some reforms among the Muslims but, to be acceptable to the general mass of the faith-

⁵⁶ Sir Syed, however, did not like these controversies and in private correspondence pleaded with his friends to leave the "prophet" alone. See Sir Syed: *Khutoot* (Urdu text), 329-42.

⁵⁷ See the Mirza's statement to this effect in *Akhbar-i-Am* (Lahore), March 17, 1899.

ful, these had to be within the Islamic framework; there was no future for a reformer, however talented and ingenious, who did not accept this necessary limitation. Sir Syed knew this and acted accordingly and was fairly successful. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, on the other hand, tried to recast this framework; he fell before he had hardly risen.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Economic Changes

AS IN OTHER spheres, so in the economic arena in India, a radical change had taken place by 1885. There were many reasons for this. First, the effects of British rule, which brought in its wake new economic ideas and practices from the West; secondly, the revolution in methods of transport; thirdly, the advent of British manufactures on the commercial scene; and lastly a reorientation of revenue and judicial administration. These changes had been slowly operating on the old economy since the beginning of the century but their total impact was not felt so intensely as in the closing years of the period under review, when it could be easily seen that India had taken a plunge into industrialisation, with all the changes that such a process involved in her methods of production and exchange.¹

¹ See Theodore Morison's *Economic Transition in India*, 153-81. One curious result of this change was the destruction of the shipbuilding

However, this is not the place to present the inevitable contrast that the old and new economic structures gave rise to; it is sufficient for our purpose to note the change and find out how it affected the relative position of Hindus and Muslims, a task which is extremely difficult as there are no statistics, books, records or documents dealing with these enormous economic changes from a communal point of view.

It should be observed at the outset that modern industrial activity during this period was generally of two types. One was the development of plantations and the other the growth of factories.

The plantations, from the beginning, were exclusively European-owned and managed. They grew considerably from 1860 onwards and gave to the owners almost a monopoly of the tea, coffee, indigo and jute industries in India. During the early stages of their rule, the Europeans were only the carriers of India's foreign trade; but the investment of their capital in the plantation industries introduced a new factor in India's economic development and they became serious competitors in exploiting India's wealth and resources.

The two foremost modern industries in India were, and have been, cotton and jute.

The first cotton mill in India was built in 1851 near Bombay; but the progress of the industry was very slow, there being, as late as 1872-73, only 18 mills in Bombay and 2 in Bengal. But by 1879 there were 56 cotton mills in India, employing about 50,000 persons.

The jute industry, which chiefly produced cordage, rope, sacking etc., was mostly confined to Bengal. In 1882 there were

industry, which, a hundred years previously was in so excellent a condition that ships built in India sailed with British-built ships to the Thames. This also hit the Muslims very hard. To quote from a minute of the Court of Directors of the East India Company: "The native sailors of India, who are chiefly Muhammadans, are, to the disgrace of our national morals, on their arrival here, led into scenes which soon divest them of the respect and awe they had entertained in India for the European character: they are robbed of their property, and left to wander, ragged and destitute, in the streets." These arguments were, of course, advanced to justify the Company's decision against shipbuilding and ship-manning in India. See Appendix No. 47, *Supplement to Fourth Report, East India Company*, 23-24.

20 jute mills employing about 20,000 persons. Unlike the cotton industry, the jute industry remained mainly European-owned.

Besides these industries, modern methods were also being employed at this time in other fields, particularly in the mining of coal, which received a great stimulus from the building of railways in India. This industry maintained steady progress and by 1889 there were 56 mines at work, giving employment to about 20,000 persons.

In the rise and development of industrialisation, British capital, enterprise and ideas played a dominant part; that is why most of the early Indian industries were owned and managed by the British. But the cotton textile industry owes its origin and progress mainly to some Indian merchants who acquired greater and greater importance as the industry began to play an increasingly vital role in Indian economy. Through cotton mills, these merchants not only got a strong foothold in industrial activity, but also amassed enormous fortunes—a result which considerably helped in drawing shy capital into the open. Moreover, because of the joint-family system, prevalent mostly among the Hindus, the process benefited only a small group of people related to the millowners. But though the benefits were confined to few, the progress made by the Indian cotton industry was both rapid and enormous. The following figures clearly bear this out: ²

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Authorised Capital</i>	<i>Persons Employed</i>	<i>Looms</i>	<i>Spindles</i>
1883-84	74	Rs. 81,677,250 (£80,000)	61,836	16,251	1,895,284
1893-94	138	Rs. 113,300,840 (£568,216)	130,570	29,392	3,539,681
1903-04	206	Rs. 154,870,050 (£1,067,245)	186,144	45,281	5,167,608

During these years, the cotton industry, it will be seen, almost trebled itself, the repeal of the import duties in 1882 giving it a great fillip. As Sir Henry James pointed out in

² Vide *Statistics of British India*, Vol. I, No. 1558 of 1922, 55.

the House of Commons, the number of spindles between 1882 and 1895 had increased from 1,550,000 to 3,500,000; and while, in the six years ending in 1882, Britain held two-thirds of the export trade with Hong Kong, China and Japan, in the four years ending 1895, four-fifths of this trade had passed to India.³ As early as 1890 India exported no less than 170,518,804 lbs. of twist and yarn.⁴

All this was very encouraging to those Indians who had plunged into this new field and had become the pioneers of industrialisation in India. Very few of these Indians, however, were Muslims. According to Dr. P. S. Lokanathan, "... the pioneering and promoting of industry in Western India was undertaken by a few wealthy merchant communities such as the Parsis and the Bhatias".⁵ Another Indian authority, Dr. P. P. Pillai, says: "Prominent among the millowners were the Bhatias, followed by Englishmen, Parsis, Jews and Muhammadans."⁶ In fact, during all this period, among the scores of Hindu and Parsi concerns, there was only one Muslim concern of any significance and that was the Curimbhai Cotton Mills, projected in 1886 and expanded in 1900 by the addition of the Mahomed and Ebrahim Mills.⁷

The jute industry, as I said earlier, was an exclusively European concern and, therefore, the question of Indian capital and management there did not arise, though it must be borne in mind that in the closing years of this period some Marwari merchants had managed to buy substantial shares in some jute mills. But the Indian contribution to jute, as compared to their contribution to cotton, was practically nil. This continued to be the case even much later. As Jathar and Beri put it:

... one remarkable contrast between these two most important organised industries of India is that, while the cotton mill industry is almost entirely in Indian hands and financed

³ *Hansard* (Debates on Indian Affairs) Session: 1895, 35-36.

⁴ Quoted by D. R. Gadgil in his *Industrial Evolution of India*. Also see for the progress of other industries during this period the chapter entitled "Twenty-five Years' Survey of Indian Industries" in Prof. V. G. Kale's *Indian Industrial and Economic Problems*, 92-113.

⁵ P. S. Lokanathan: *Industrial Organisation in India*, 22.

⁶ P. Padmanabha Pillai: *Economic Conditions in India*, 191.

⁷ For further details see the *Indian Textile Journal*, April, 1904.

by capital raised in India, the jute industry owes its origin and development to European—mostly Scottish—enterprise and capital.⁸

Another point to be noted is that the jute industry was highly centralised, as many as 90 per cent of the mills being round about Calcutta and “the Bengali”, as Dr. Pillai explains, “never succeeded in passing from the stage of trading and financing to that of manufacture, probably owing to the steady flow of British capital and expert skill into the industry”.⁹

The advent of industrialisation also gave a great stimulus to banking, which had been in vogue in India in one form or another long before the British came. But the history of modern banks for which Indians were responsible dates from 1881¹⁰ when the Oudh Commercial Bank was founded, with a small paid-up capital of Rs. 2,730, which was raised to Rs. 100,000 in 1886, to Rs. 200,000 in 1888 and to Rs. 300,000 in 1897. This Bank was owned and managed by a group of Hindu zamindars and vakils (lawyers) from the Punjab and the United Provinces and had its head office at Fyzabad in the U.P.

Some years later, on April 12, 1895, the Punjab National Bank was established (capital: Rs. 200,000) mainly through the efforts of Lala Lajpat Rai, the well-known Congress leader. All its directors and the principal shareholders were Hindus, mostly English-educated professors, doctors and barristers. The bank soon became very popular among Hindu trading circles and opened branches in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi.

The Swadeshi movement, beginning in 1905, stimulated the establishment of many more Indian-owned banks, large and small, all over the country. By 1910, their number had risen to 476, but the Muslims’ share in this enterprise was almost insignificant. They did not own a single bank which could command attention. Besides, in indigenous banking, they were never a

⁸ G. B. Jathar and S. G. Beri: *Indian Economics*, II, 57.

⁹ P. Padmanabha Pillai: *Economic Conditions in India*, 185.

¹⁰ As J. M. Keynes, in his *Indian Currency and Finance*, wrote in 1913: “As late as 1900, these banks were comparatively insignificant. Since that time they have succeeded in attracting so large a volume of deposits as to make them an important part of the banking system of the country.” (224)

factor; everywhere the Mahajans, the Marwaris and the Banias reigned supreme. The Muslims rarely lent money; but they borrowed in plenty.¹¹

Insurance was another field to which the enterprising Hindus, well-versed in modern techniques of commerce, turned their attention. One of their first successful efforts was the Bharat Insurance Company founded by Lala Harkishen Lal. This company was largely instrumental in popularising life insurance at a time when such a project was practically unknown in India.

The Parsis also played an important role in the development of insurance in India and one of their great leaders, Sir Pheroze-shah Mehta was to a large extent responsible for the success of that noted concern, The Empire of India Life Assurance Company, founded in 1897 by R. E. Bharucha and E. F. Allum.

The only company in the field of insurance during the period under review in which there was considerable Muslim influence was the Bombay Mutual Life Assurance Society, registered in 1871. Most of its directors were Hindus or Englishmen but for some time its Chairman was Mirza Ali Muhammad Khan, a Muslim solicitor, and a few Muslims held some principal shares in it. Besides, in the management of the Oriental Government Security Life Insurance Company, the well-known Muslim industrialist from Bombay, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim, had some say since he was one of the directors for many years. Another Muslim, R. Currimbhoy, held 23 principal shares in the same Company.

Further, we see in this period another significant development which also indicates the absence of Muslim influence in the economic life of India. This was the disappearance of old cities and the rise of new ones. "The best general test", says Dr. J. H. Clapham, "of the industrialisation of a nation's life under modern conditions is the rate and character of the growth of its

¹¹ Even those Muslims, who could afford to lend money did not profit much from such a transaction. " . . . the zamindar, who is a well-to-do and liberal Muhammadan, makes advances to his tenants at what a money-lender would regard as nominal rates. The advances are not considered moneylending as the zamindar regards money usuary as morally wrong." *An Inquiry into the Economic Conditions of the Agricultural and Labouring Classes in the North-West Provinces and Oudh* (1888), 115.

towns.”¹² Prominent among the cities which grew up as a result of industrialisation were Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and a few places in the interior of the Indian peninsula like Kanpur and Ahmedabad; while a number of old towns, holding pre-eminent positions under Muslim rule, like Dacca, Murshidabad, Lucknow, Tanjore, etc., lost not only their importance but a great deal of their working population, which naturally resulted in the decay of old handicrafts in which the Muslim artisans had acquired much proficiency.¹³ For instance, Dacca, a predominantly Muslim town and capital of the Nawabs of Bengal which was famous for its muslin industry, suffered a rapid decline at this time. A similar story can be told about the decline of Murshidabad and Lucknow and other old places which, under the Muslim rule, flourished, not only in culture but also in trade and handicrafts.¹⁴

The contrast, however, between the old and new cities becomes complete when we examine the character and composition of the new cities which were then growing up as a result of industrialisation. According to the Census Report of 1901, the composition of the Hindu-Muslim population in some of the most important cities in India was as follows:

	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Muslims</i>
Calcutta	847,796	553,271	249,939
Bombay	776,006	508,608	155,747
Madras	509,346	410,648	57,331
Cawnpore	197,170	144,013	47,949
Ahmedabad	185,889	129,505	38,159

¹² J. H. Clapham: *Economic Development of France and Germany (1815-1914)*, 53.

¹³ Even as far South as Madura the situation was no better. For instance, in that town “ . . . prior to the importation of lace, there were 500 Musalman families engaged in making lace, and in their place there are, it would appear, only ten families employed in making country lace.” (*Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency during the last Forty Years of British Administration*, ccxv).

¹⁴ When Lord Clive entered Murshidabad in 1757, he wrote of it: “This city is an extensive, populous and rich as the City of London, with this difference—that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last City.” (Quoted by William Digby in his *‘Prosperous’ British India: A Revelation from Official Records*, 104.)

Besides the fact that in most of the new cities the Hindus were in an overwhelming majority, which naturally made them the greater beneficiaries of the fruits of industrialisation, there was also the predominance of their mercantile class in the markets and share-bazars. The Bombay market, for instance, was almost dominated by Bhatias and Banias. In Calcutta, the European influence was all-pervading but slowly some rich Bengalis and Marwaris were getting a foothold. Madras was more or less controlled by the Chettiars. The position of Muslims was as bad in Kanpur as in Ahmedabad or any other industrial and commercial centre.

In my introductory chapter I have already alluded to some of the causes of poverty among the Muslims. By 1883, there were not more than a handful of Muslims left with big fortunes. Those, who were fortunate, were either landlords or property-owners; and, as the evidence recorded by the Indian Industrial Commission clearly shows, the funds which were being tapped by industrial concerns very rarely came from the landowning and propertied classes.

How did it come about that the Muslims were so completely excluded from India's new economic life? There must be many reasons but not all of them are obvious. "Much seems attributable", writes D. H. Buchanan, "to their lack of business experience during the centuries of Muhammadan rule. The respectable families generally had government connections while business was in the hands of Hindu castemen, often of large fortune and great shrewdness. When the British took over administration, the Muhammadans were thrown out of employment and were unable to make headway in other lines. Though they had received large official incomes, they had spent extravagantly and consequently had little capital to invest. They inherited the early Christian attitude toward the taking of interest . . . also the strong family feeling, the emphasis on brotherhood within the fold, and the cavalier attitude toward material wealth. . . ."¹⁵ All these factors must have tended to dissipate their incomes and keep them poor. In his famous study of the Punjab peasant, Darling estimated that the Muslim farmers

¹⁵ D. H. Buchanan: *Development of Capitalistic Enterprise in India*, 147-48.

owed much more than a proportionate share of rural debts, which was almost wholly lent by Hindus and Sikhs.¹⁶

But whatever might have been the causes of Muslim backwardness in industrial enterprises, at least two, (1) their growing poverty and (2) the absence of a professional mercantile class among them, must have proved decisive. As has already been observed, the bulk of the capital that the Indians invested in industrial and commercial activities came from the professional and mercantile classes which had got over the traditional habit of hoarding or spending on various non-productive items such as ornaments and ceremonies. Here also, the evidence recorded by the Indian Industrial Commission strongly supports this conclusion. To quote only two such evidences:

- (1) The Hon. James Currie, then Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce: "Capital for industrial enterprises is principally drawn from surplus profits, in Calcutta and Bombay from bazaars, in the districts mainly from professional men."¹⁷
- (2) The Hon. A. H. Silver, then Director of Industries, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh: "Middle-class Indians, following professional occupations, such as lawyers, doctors and the clerical staff of business concerns, seem to be the most ready to invest their savings in public companies. . . ."¹⁸

Among the Muslims there was no trace of a mercantile class at this time. Of course there were a few Bohra and Khoja merchants in Bombay but in the general development they hardly counted. Besides, the only business in which the Muslims seemed to flourish was that of butchers, and that too because they had no competition there from the Hindus. About a pro-

¹⁶ M. L. Darling: *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, xvi. According to Darling, such a situation "is not calculated to improve the relationship between Hindu and Muhammadan, for prolonged economic disability produces a sense of injury and distrust which makes good feeling impossible." Also see S. S. Thorburn's *Musalmans and Moneylenders in the Punjab*, particularly the views of O'Brien and Lyall quoted therein, as to the causes of Muslim indebtedness (84-88) and the two very informative Appendices A and B (155-78).

¹⁷ *Indian Industrial Commission: Minutes of Evidence*, I, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

fessional class among the Muslims I have written at length in the introductory chapter, where I have not only referred to the Muslim cry for "the redress of the balance between the Hindus and Muslims in State employment" but also to Lord Dufferin's famous Resolution on that subject. Unfortunately, despite some efforts on the part of Local Governments, the position of the Muslims in Public Services even at the end of the period under review had not improved to any appreciable extent, a fact which is patent from the tables on pp. 275-276.

From these tables it is apparent that the total number of Government posts occupied by the Muslims remained stationary all through this period. It was 5 per cent in 1887; 5 per cent in 1897; and 5 per cent in 1903. The position of other communities continued to improve steadily, being 29 per cent in 1887 and reaching 33 per cent in 1903. These figures explode the myth that the British administrators always favoured the Muslims at the cost of others; or that the Muslims received an exceptionally favoured treatment from the Raj. Of course, in social life and political discussions some of the British dignitaries were exceptionally courteous and even sympathetic to Sir Syed and his colleagues; occasionally they also spoke in high terms about the status of the Muslims; to keep the Muslims away from political agitation, their loyalty to the Crown was always extolled and at crucial moments "the great leaders of the great Muhammadan community" were often patted on their backs for their faith in British fair-play. But all this cannot establish the claim, so frequently made, that the Muslims were a favoured group. On the contrary, there is enough evidence, apart from some of the facts and figures quoted above, to prove that at no time had the British any invidious love for the Muslims. Even in the expression of sentiments the division was fairly maintained as can be easily verified by a perusal of the Indian debates in Parliament or of the editorial comments on Indian affairs in the British press.

Moreover, coming back to the grant of official favours, we find that at this time the only posts in which there was a steady Muslim rise were those carrying a salary of Rs. 500 and above per month. In 1887, the Muslims had 51 such posts; in 1897, 83; and in 1903, 98. Probably many of these were occupied by the new Muslim graduates thrown out by the M.A.O. College and

A. 1887

	<i>HINDUS</i> (including Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists and Indian Christians)	<i>MUHAMMADANS</i>
Total number of Government posts	2,595	408
Percentage	29	5
Percentage of posts on		
Rs. 200-300	47	8
Rs. 300-400	35	4
Rs. 400-500	41	8
Rs. 500-600	18	2
Rs. 600-700	21	2
Rs. 700-800	6	1
Rs. 800-900	10	1
Rs. 900-1,000	2	—

B. 1897

	<i>HINDUS</i> (including Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists and Indian Christians)	<i>MUHAMMADANS</i>
Total number of Government posts	3,149	533
Percentage	32	5
Percentage of posts on		
Rs. 200-300	52	8
Rs. 300-400	33	5
Rs. 400-500	34	6
Rs. 500-600	23	3
Rs. 600-700	26	3
Rs. 700-800	12	2
Rs. 800-900	10	1
Rs. 900-1,000	8	3

C. 1903

	<i>HINDUS</i> (including Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists and Indian Christians)	<i>MUHAMMADANS</i>
Total number of Government posts	3,503	577
Percentage	33	5
Percentage of posts on		
Rs. 200-300	52	8
Rs. 300-400	37	6
Rs. 400-500	35	5
Rs. 500-600	20	5
Rs. 600-700	25	2
Rs. 700-800	11	1
Rs. 800-900	16	2
Rs. 900-1,000	7	2

other Muslim institutions. In fact, the pace at which these graduates were produced was slow enough for the authorities to absorb them in the bureaucratic machinery without causing undue disturbance to the other communities. There was, therefore, little scope for "discontentment" which, years previously, Lord Lansdowne had described as the cannonfodder of political agitation.¹⁹ Among the Hindus the situation was different; the number of Hindu graduates was rapidly increasing. They were far in excess of the posts available. Hence their discontentment found its natural expression in annoyance with the state of affairs and in revolt against the Government. Economic factors forced the Hindu to be a rebel as they encouraged the Muslim to become a loyalist.

Besides, the Muslim leaders continually impressed upon the educated Muslims that their economic betterment depended upon the British. For their part they also realised that, but for Government jobs, they would be, despite their educational

¹⁹ See the article, "Indian Affairs", in *The Times*, London, January 29, 1894.

qualifications, without a decent livelihood. Unlike the Hindus, they had no other means of employment; no industries or banks or newspapers to absorb them. Besides, in Hindu concerns they knew they would, as a rule, not be very welcome.

In consequence, educated Muslims looked to the Government and the Government offered them jobs; but, excepting in some special cases, their employment was on no better terms than that of others. That is why the Muslims did not fare much better during this period. Of course, occasionally, efforts were made to redress the balance but they were rarely on a large scale. On the whole, in these matters, the Government followed, what might be called, an "equitable" policy. This was made clear by Sir Arthur Lawley, Governor of Madras, as late as in 1906. "If I may say a word", he said, "as to the deficiency in the number of Muhammadans, it is, as I have said elsewhere, not because Government wish to shut the door in their face, but because, on the contrary, to pass through the door they must bring with them passports of efficiency and educational capacity and must carry out the duties of any office in which they might be called upon to serve."²⁰

One of the main criteria of efficiency at this time was a knowledge of English and in that, as we have seen in a previous chapter, the Muslims were yet miles behind the rest. Moreover, their obsession with their so-called glorious past was so deep-rooted that only a revolutionary shake-up could have brought the Muslims to a realistic appraisal of the changed situation. But their leadership, being essentially feudal in character, had neither the capacity nor the desire to perform this task. The result was that a wrong foundation was laid for the welfare of the Muslims; it led inevitably to more and more frustration and to their growing isolation from the mainstream of India's economic development.

²⁰ *The Bombay Gazette*, October 4, 1906.

CHAPTER NINE

Communal Conflicts

ALL THROUGH this period there were many Hindu-Muslim conflicts; these were not confined to politics alone but existed in other fields as well. To a number of them I have made pointed reference in the preceding chapters; in this chapter, however, I intend discussing two of its most aggravating features. They were also the worst expressions of communal antagonism. For in no other conflicts were religious passions so bitterly roused at this time as during the outbreak of Hindu-Muslim riots and over the Hindi-Urdu controversy. Each of them, therefore, deserves a special consideration.

(A) Hindu-Muslim Riots

Before the British there were few, if any, communal disorders in the sense of violent outbreaks between members of the two

main religions in India. In any event these were neither frequent, widespread, nor of much significance. This might have been due to many reasons, not the least being that of the two, one group believed that it was the Government, and was often accepted as such by the other; or perhaps because there were no serious economic clashes between them. This, however, is no place to attempt an investigation into the historical origins of communal riots. Besides, the problem is too vast and complicated to be generalised upon. For our purpose it is enough to have a rough idea of the many riots that broke out during this period and to find out the effect that these riots produced on the relations between the two communities, politically as well as socially.

In order to have a clearer picture it may be useful to go back to the earliest of these riots. According to the Memoranda submitted by the Government of India and the India Office to the India Statutory Commission "the grave Benares riots of 1809" were "the earliest notable instance of a communal disturbance during the British period".¹ However, this doesn't seem to be quite accurate because we find that there was a Hindu-Muslim riot in Sylhet (in Assam) as early as in December 1782, which had caused some serious concern at Fort St. William. The immediate cause of that riot, as explained by R. Lindsay, the officer in charge of the district, in his communication to Warren Hastings, was that some Muslims in Sylhet, which then had a two-thirds Muslim majority, demanded of the Hindus the discontinuance of "their religious ceremonies during the Muharram".² The Hindus refused to comply with this and petitioned Lindsay for redress. When the Muslims came to know of this they became infuriated and attacked the Hindu Dewan and the Hindu priests and their houses of worship. Upon intelligence being brought to Lindsay he went to the trouble spot and asked the Muslims to disperse. Their leader, "a priest of considerable rank", immediately drew his sword and attacked Lindsay, exclaiming in a loud voice: "This is the

¹ *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. IV, Part I, 96.

² *The Sylhet District Records*, edited by Walter F. Firminger, Vol. I (1770-1785), 123-31.

day to kill or to die; the reign of the English is at an end".³ In the clash that ensued Lindsay shot dead many of the Muslim ring-leaders, including the priest. Two days later the leading Muslims, on receiving a summons of attendance from Lindsay, went to him and apologised "for the conduct of their sect in general upon the present occasion, which they attributed to the enthusiastic madness of a few individuals, who suffered for their folly".⁴

In the Banaras riots of 1809 the immediate cause was "the attempted construction of a building by Hindus on the neutral ground between the mosque [built by Aurangzeb] and the present temple of Bisheshwar".⁵ The Muslims opposed this by invading the temple and destroying the celebrated pillar, the Lat Bhairon. "The next day great crowds of Hindus attacked the mosque of Aurangzeb, set it on fire and put to death every Muslim of the neighbourhood who fell into their hands. The entire city was given up to pillage and slaughter; and order was not restored by the troops until some fifty mosques had been destroyed and several hundred persons had lost their lives."⁶

For many years after this there was peace and quiet, which was interrupted once in 1851 and again in 1874, but on both these occasions the riots took place between the Muslims and the Parsis in the city of Bombay. The cause of the first outbreak was alleged to have been the publication of an attack in a Gujarati newspaper, *Chitra Dnyan Durban*, by a Parsi—Byramjee Cursetjee Ghandy—on Muhammad with the Prophet's portrait published along with the article. This angered the Muslims, who could not tolerate any disrespect to their Prophet. The second outbreak, admittedly of a more serious nature, was also caused by a similar incident, but this time instead of an article it was a book in Gujarati, "Great Prophets of the World", published by one Rustomjee Hormusjee Jalbhoy, who, the Muslims alleged, had made therein attacks against the character of their

³ *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. II (Sylhet), by B. C. Allen, 39-41.

⁴ *The Sylhet District Records*, edited by Walter F. Firminger, Vol. I (1770-1785).

⁵ *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. IV, Part I, 96.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Prophet and his relations and "spoken of Muhammad's son Ebrahim as being born of a courtesan named Mareea."⁷

Coming nearer to the period under review, there was a minor Moplah riot on the eve of the birth of the Congress in 1885 at Malliapuran near Calicut, when eleven rioters were killed and two wounded. The alleged cause of the riot was the intense provocation given to the Moplahs by the action of one Raman, a caste-Hindu, in becoming a Muslim in order to marry a Muslim woman and then, after the marriage, reverting to Hinduism. On December 27, 1884 some dozen Moplahs went to Raman's house, armed with guns, and shot some of his relations and set his house on fire. They then went to the house of a rich Brahmin and shot him dead. Finally they took shelter in a Hindu temple at Trikalyur, and refused to give themselves up to Lieutenant Day and Captain Maxwell, who had arrived on the scene with a large party of British troops. The Moplahs declared that they were prepared to die for Islam and had so well guarded themselves that dynamite had to be used before they could be captured. In fact the Moplahs put up such a stiff resistance that one of the British soldiers, Private Barratt, was awarded a V.C. for gallantry in suppressing their attacks.⁸

This riot, however, had no widespread repercussions. But during the notorious Etawah and Delhi riots, which broke out in the first week of October 1886, the popular reactions were so serious that the Indian correspondent of *The Times* emphasised that "notwithstanding all we hear about the growth of feelings of union among the natives, the animosity between the Hindus and Muhammadans is perhaps as deep and bitter as it was a century ago".⁹ According to official reports, the cause of these riots was the simultaneous occurrence of two religious festivals,

⁷ *The Bombay Gazette*, February 13, 1874.

In defence of the Parsis, see D. A. Talyarkhan's *The Riots of 1874: Their True History and Philosophy*. In defence of the Muslims see Hafiz Sudrool Islam's *Remarks on India*. For the official account see *General Report on the Administration of the Bombay Presidency*, (1873-74), xxii-xxiv.

⁸ *The Pioneer*, January 5, 1885. Also see a three-column leader on the "Mopla Outrages" in the *Pioneer*, February 21, 1885.

⁹ For an account of the riot see *The Times*, London, October 6, 1886; for a review of it see *The Times*, October 11, 1886.

Ramlila of the Hindus and Muharram of the Muslims. At the same time, riots also broke out between Hindus and Muslims at Jaitpore in the Kathiawad District of Bombay Presidency. The cause was the same but there were no serious casualties. Feeling was said "to run high at Ludhiana, Multan and other cities in the Punjab".¹⁰

In Delhi the situation become quite serious. Commenting on it more than a month later, *The Times* correspondent wrote: "The recent religious riots at Delhi appear to have left a considerable feeling of bitterness behind. The Hindu cloth merchants of that city have united to refuse to sell to or hold any dealings with the Muhammadans and the symptoms of boycotting and conspiracy are spreading to other trades."¹¹ The situation became so serious that a large number of influential Muslims petitioned the Deputy Commissioner of the city praying for his interference and asking for protection.

Three years later there was another serious riot. This time it was in the tribal area of Dera Ghazi Khan. The cause was the conversion of a Hindu to Islam. Among the local Muslims this event was celebrated with great rejoicings, the convert being taken in a procession through the streets. Naturally the Hindus became infuriated and, according to a report, "rose up by hundreds, armed with sticks and clubs".¹² In the fight that followed, casualties were suffered on both sides, but the Muslims were said to have suffered more. Again *The Times* correspondent wrote:

Religion and race jealousies between Muhammadans and Hindus show no signs of abatement with time, and were it not for the cold, stern impartiality of the British authority in India these rival communities would very soon involve the whole country in civil war.¹³

By 1891 this disease of communal antagonism had spread even to the South. In that year a serious riot broke out between the Hindus and the Muslims at Palaked in the Salem District

¹⁰ Ibid., October 18, 1885.

¹¹ Ibid., November 29, 1886.

¹² Ibid., January 24, 1889.

¹³ Ibid.

of the Madras Presidency. Again the cause was a religious procession but this time it was a Hindu procession attacked by some fanatical Muslims—"Ghairmahdis", as they were called.¹⁴

For the next two years there was comparative peace; but in June 1893, serious riots took place in many parts of the country—notably in Rangoon and Bombay, in the Azimgarh district of North-Western Provinces and in the Banaras division of the district of Ghazipur; as also at Ballia in the U.P., at Bareilly in Rohilkand, at Baraich in Oudh, at Bassantpur in Bihar and at Prabhas Patan in Junagadh. In many places, clashes occurred because of either kine-killing by Muslims on the occasion of Baqr-Id or due to the anti-Muslim propaganda of the Cow Protection Societies. From official accounts it is not possible to generalise and single out either of the two communities as the aggressors. If, for disturbances in Bombay and Rangoon, the Muslims were blamed, for troubles in the North West the Hindus were held responsible.¹⁵ In fact, the official explanations seem to suggest that both sides were equally guilty. As Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy, in a speech at Agra said: "The Muhammadans had been sometimes at fault and the Hindus at others."¹⁶

A vivid account of how one of these riots started was given by *The Times* in one of its articles on "Indian Affairs". It dealt with the communal disorders in Bombay in which, in the course of a week's fighting, 65 persons died and more than 500 were injured:

It was to certain meetings and counter-meetings for an avowedly charitable object that the Bombay riots were directly due. Somnath, in the native State of Junagarh, has been the scene of outbursts of Muhammadan and Hindu fanaticism from the days of Mahmud, the Idol Smasher, in 1024 A.D. It is now a city of ruins and graves. On the west the plain is dotted with Muhammadan tombs; on the east with temples

¹⁴ *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. IV, Part I, 97.

¹⁵ See Parliamentary Paper C. 538 (1893-4): *Religious Disturbances in India*.

¹⁶ *Speeches by the Marquis of Lansdowne*, 358. To elaborate his point the Viceroy referred to "a familiar English proverb, which says that it takes two to make a quarrel . . ."

and shrines to the two great Hindu deities. Under its modern name of Prabhas Pattan it is still the scene of bloody religious tumults and this year the proceedings proved rather more murderous than usual. The Hindus in Bombay accordingly convened a public meeting to raise a relief fund for their suffering co-religionists in the native state of Junagarh; the Bombay Muhammadans responded by a counter-meeting to send succour to wounded and afflicted followers of Islam. A rumour spread among the lower Hindus that the Muhammadans were going to hold a general slaughter of cows; a counter-rumour spread among the lower Muhammadans that the Hindus were going to wreck all the Muhammadan butchers' shops. The excitement was allowed to gain head, mosques were desecrated, temples attacked and a fairly equal number of Hindu and Muhammadan rioters were killed in street fighting.¹⁷

In other riots also the circumstances were perhaps not much different, the determining factors in most cases being (1) the rumours; (2) the activities of the vagabonds; and (3) the exploitation of religious prejudices. In all cases success was assured to the rioters by the fact that hostile communal sentiments could easily be roused among the two peoples. Moreover, on many occasions the officials and the police were neither as prompt nor as ruthless as the situation demanded; sometimes grave allegations were made concerning their handling of such affairs.¹⁸

But these things apart, the fact remained that the relations between the two communities were much worsened as a result of the frequent riots. Even among the most enlightened and educated sections these disturbances excited partisan and sectional feelings. This is apparent from the comments in the "native" press, the Hindu newspapers siding with Hindu rioters

¹⁷ *The Times*, London, September 18, 1893. Also see an editorial on the riots in *The Times*, September 21, 1893.

¹⁸ See Sir William Wedderburn's article on the Bombay riots in the *New Review*, September, 1893, and Dr. G. W. Leither's article, "Cow-Killing Riots, Seditious Pamphlets, and the Indian Police", in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January-April, 1894, 84-95.

and the Muslim papers defending Muslim rioters.¹⁹ Even some of the responsible leaders were not free from this canker; often they made an enthusiastic defence of the rioters belonging to their own religions, irrespective of whether it helped the situation or not.²⁰ Very few ever tried to rationalise the whole problem and de-communalise the atmosphere. Consequently, even educated Hindus and Muslims, though no participants in the riots, often became adherents of aggressive communalism. It is in this sense that the riots played a disastrous part in Indian politics.

Then there was the economic aspect. Sometimes communal riots were really the revolt of one class against the economic domination of another. For instance, Muslim vendors rising against the big Hindu merchants or Hindu peasants revolting against the big Muslim zamindars. But whatever the real cause, the fight often assumed a communal colour and engulfed within it on either side many not directly connected with it. Besides, the professional hooligans never missed an opportunity to raise the religious cry and thus made the whole affair degenerate into the worst kind of religious warfare. From an administrative point of view, these riots were nothing but breaches of peace, essentially the work of anti-social elements; but viewed in a broader perspective they were the manifestations of grave maladjustments in Indian society. Till these maladjustments were removed the frictions could not be prevented.²¹

The various riots in 1893 had begun to cause such serious concern to all those interested in communal harmony that everywhere peace committees were formed and Government was urged to be more vigilant and firm. In the House of Commons, Sir William Wedderburn asked the Under-Secretary of State for

¹⁹ See, for instance, the editorial in the *Indian Mirror*, September 7, 1893, wherein the newspaper asserted that "there can be no doubt that a crusade has been undertaken against the Hindus and their venerated cattle, the cows; and that is really how the riots have resulted."

²⁰ See a pamphlet entitled, *An Appeal to the English Public on behalf of the Hindus of the North-West Provinces and Oudh* by Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar.

²¹ For a clearer appreciation of the causes of Hindu-Muslim riots see K. M. Panikkar's "Psychology of Hindu-Muslim Riots" in the *Contemporary Review*, February 1927.

India for fuller information on these riots and suggested that the Government of India be asked to appoint a mixed commission of official and non-official members "to investigate the causes of such riots and report on the best means to be adopted to remove these causes".²² Consequently, a copy of the official telegram from the Governor-General giving the details of these was laid on the table of the House some months later; but in regard to the second part of the question the Under-Secretary, Lord Russell said: "As my Hon. friend is aware, religious riots are of almost annual recurrence in India, and the Secretary of State does not, as at present advised, think it necessary to direct the Government of India to appoint a Commission as suggested by my Hon. Friend."²³ "In other words", commented *India*, "the disease is so severe that there is no need to call in a physician and obtain a diagnosis."²⁴

Three days later Dadabhai Naoroji raised the very same question in Parliament again. He asked whether the Secretary of State for India would lay on the table of the House a return of the Hindu-Muslim riots during the previous five years, showing how each riot originated, how it was dealt with and how many persons were killed and wounded. To this Russell replied that "The Secretary of State was not in possession of the full information which would enable a report for the last five years to be prepared."²⁵

Nevertheless as a result of these questions, the Secretary of State asked the Government of India "to submit a general report on the recent riots . . . showing their origin, why they are becoming more frequent than in past years, and the measures which should be adopted in order to control them."²⁶

In their reply, which took them about two months, the Government of India emphasised, at the outset, that "religious disturbances in India are no novelty" and that these had occurred from time to time in many places and on many different occa-

²² *Hansard* (Debates on Indian Affairs), Session: 1893, 616.

²³ *Ibid.*, 617.

²⁴ *India*, October 1, 1895.

²⁵ *Hansard* (Debates on Indian Affairs), Session: 1893, 617.

²⁶ See the letter from the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, No. 100 (Public) dated India Office, London, September 7, 1893.

sions, both before and since the establishment of British rule. "In former times, however," they said, "these disturbances were less frequent because one party being dominant in administration the other usually submitted to the loss of privileges." This was so in the Punjab before its annexation;²⁷ and it was still the case in most Native States, whether Hindu or Muslim.

Under British rule the situation changed, no one party being allowed to impose its will upon another. "Consequently," reported the Government of India, "there has been a general tendency towards assertion of religious privileges on both sides. . . ." The British administrators, the reply held, were faced with "one of the most difficult problems", viz. how to "reconcile the impartial administration of justice and the equal treatment of all creeds with the necessity of keeping the peace and repressing demonstrations intended or likely to give offence to religious opponents".²⁸ Very often ancient custom had been followed; but even that was not always satisfactory. The reasons were obvious. Such custom might have been violently interrupted; or circumstances might have entirely changed since its establishment; or its basis might have been found to be too uncertain and controversial; or the repression necessary for its enforcement might have seemed inconsistent with reasonable religious liberty. In short it was no simple task to keep the Hindus and the Muslims at peace and the Government of India believed that it was doing everything possible to check them from flying at each other's throats.

Besides, the Government always took special precautions on the two occasions when such disturbances often occurred: These were:

- (1) when the festivals of the two religions coincided; and
- (2) when cows, whether for food or sacrifice, were slaughtered by the Muslims.

As for their frequency in recent years, the Government gave the following reasons:

²⁷ In the Punjab previously to annexation kine-slaughter was a capital offence. This law was annulled by the Lawrence brothers in 1849.

²⁸ See the letter from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, No. 84 dated December 27, 1893.

- (1) Improved means of transport and communication and interchange of news between different parts of the country, causing the publication of exaggerated reports and partisan statements.
- (2) Embittered feelings of the Muslims, who were becoming more and more conscious every day that the Hindus had outstripped them in the race of life and had obtained almost a monopoly of public employment and of success in legal and other professions.
- (3) Hindu religious revival. The development of Cow Protection Societies was given as one of the marked features of this movement which aimed at drawing tighter the bonds of Hindu religious discipline by inculcating among the Hindus respect for Brahmins and veneration for the cow.²⁹

However, as the official explanation was long delayed, all kinds of suggestions were made in the Press both in India and England as to the real cause of the disturbances. Some British newspapers even hinted that these might have been engineered by the Congress in order to paralyse administration and coerce the Muslims into submitting to the dictates of the Congress leaders. *The Times* was particularly sympathetic towards the Muslims and mentioned that the latest riots might have been due to the strong resentment felt by the Muslims over the question of simultaneous examinations.³⁰ *The Daily Chronicle* disagreed and took an entirely opposite view. According to this paper these riots occurred because of "the belief that prevails in certain circles in India, first, that the Government is inclined to pet the Musalman element at the expense of the Hindu element and, second, that this petting is part of a general policy of 'dividing and ruling'."³¹ Nor was the *Manchester Guardian* any more kindly disposed towards the Muslims. Refuting the suggestion that the latest riots were largely

²⁹ See the letter from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, No. 84 dated December 27, 1893.

³⁰ *The Times*, London, August 14, 1893.

³¹ Quoted by *India*, September 1, 1893.

caused by the Hindu Gorakshini movement,³² it blamed the Muslims, saying that peace could not be "expected while one section of the community wantonly and ostentatiously outrages the feelings of another". It suggested that if the cow sacrifices were not abandoned "they might at least be restricted in such a manner as to avoid offence, and the Hindus, as Mr. Pincott observes, 'are a peaceable people, ever ready to close their eyes against what is not obtruded on their attention'."³³

In India also most of the Hindu newspapers attributed the riots to official "pampering" of the Muslims;³⁴ but the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* said that their occurrence was due to interference of Parliament in Indian affairs and asked the authorities, in the interest of peace and harmony, to bear in mind in future the following three suggestions in governing India:

First, the rule that the majority should be followed should be dropped. Secondly, the rules governing elections to the Legislative Councils should be amended in such a way as to enable Muhammadans to elect their own representatives. Thirdly, a greater portion of Englishmen should be maintained in the Civil Service.³⁵

However, after 1893, perhaps as a reaction to the widespread holocaust of that year, there were fewer riots. They were also much less serious in their consequences. This was possible because the authorities had at long last realised that if they did not repress disturbances with, as Lansdowne had urged, "a

³² For an account of the Gorakshini Movement see "Indian Affairs" in *The Times*, London, September 18, 1893. Also see Dr. G. W. Leitner's paper on the "Cow-Killing Riots", wherein he tries "to show that the slaughter of a cow is by no mean obligatory on Muhammadans." (*Asiatic Quarterly Review*, July-October, 1893, 329-36).

³³ *The Manchester Guardian*, February 9, 1894. Also see F. Pincott's review of R. Green's book: *The Heroes Five (Panchon Pir) in India*, February 1, 1894 and in the *Indian Magazine*, January 1894.

³⁴ See, for instance, an account of the Hindu-Muslim riots at Bareilly in the N.W.P. in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, July 5, 1895. Even the *Bengalee* remarked: "Next, in fact, to the Congress movement, that which has exercised the Indian people and their rulers is the development of the societies for the protection of kine." (*The Bengalee*, May 19, 1894)

³⁵ Quoted by *India*, November 1, 1893. Also see Muhammad Ismail Khan's views about the riots in *National Congress ki nisbat Musalman ki rai*, 12.

strong hand", these might recoil on the Government itself and make orderly administration extremely difficult. In the Poona riots, therefore, which broke out in October 1894, Lord Harris, the Governor of Bombay, was most ruthless and unsparing in his measures to control the situation,³⁶ with the result that the whole affair, despite large-scale preparations and well-directed efforts by the rioters, was suppressed within less than a day. The immediate cause of the riots was the playing of music by Hindus before a mosque in defiance of the law; their reason for doing so being the alleged annoyance caused to the Hindus by a petition which the Poona Muslims had sent to the Government seeking protection against certain overt instigations by some local Hindu leaders asking their co-religionists to riot—these had been circulated and broadcast throughout Poona in the shape of pamphlets and leaflets disparaging the Muharram festival, calling the Hindus "to arms" and urging the Marathas to rebel against the *Mlechchas* "as Shivaji had done", declaring that the "dagger of subjection to foreign rule penetrates the bosom of all" and urging that a religious outbreak should be made the first step towards the overthrow of "all alien traces".³⁷ For the outbreak of these riots some of Tilak's activities were also questioned in certain responsible quarters, particularly his "innovation" of setting Ganpatis in pavilions in the style of *taboots* and organising nightly "singing parties" accompanied by tom-toms and "cheap jibes" against the Muslims.

Harris was, therefore, particularly severe against the Maharashtrian Brahmins, whom he openly accused of "disorderly be-

³⁶ *The Times of India* (Mail Edition), September 22 and 29, 1894. Also see an account of the riots in *The Times*, London, October 15, 1894. In a subsequent issue, referring to the inflammatory poems and leaflets distributed among the Hindus of Poona, the newspaper quoted the following verse from one of the handbills, entitled, "Advice to Hindus":

Riots have occurred here and there and
Hindus have been beaten,
Let us all join together in the contest
and inflict revenge;
Bring forth the Ganpati and outvie the Muharram
Let the crowds gather in masses to see the mimics.

—*The Times*, London, November 20, 1894

³⁷ *The Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition) September 22, 1894.

haviour" and "lawlessness". The Marathi press was naturally furious with the Governor and in turn charged him with showing undue favours to the Muslims and thus "promoting such disturbances as a counterblast against the Congress".³⁸ Tilak's own paper, the *Mahratha*, told him that the greatest service he could render was to keep quiet. "In his case," it emphasised, "silence at this time is golden."³⁹

A few months later, another Hindu-Muslim riot broke out in Dhulia. This too was quickly suppressed. Again the trouble started with a Hindu procession's playing music before a mosque.⁴⁰ In 1897, Chitpur was the scene of terrible Muslim massacres caused by their obstructing the possession of a piece of land under an order of the Court on the ground that the land contained a mosque. The sequence of events might be briefly recounted: On Monday the police enforced possession; on Tuesday more than two thousand Muslims assembled to rebuild the dismantled mosque; they were dispersed by the police; on Wednesday the Muslims were suspected of damaging the local pumping station and of cutting telephone wires. As the crowds became uncontrollable the military fired and, according to the official report, "eight rioters were reported killed and many wounded", but Reuter's correspondent on the spot said that "a low estimate places the number killed at 600".⁴¹ But notwithstanding the conflicting reports of casualties, the rioting was admittedly of a serious nature and caused much uneasiness among the Muslims.

However, for the remaining six to seven years of the period under review, there were no serious communal riots. Of course small skirmishes continued to take place here and there but they

³⁸ See editorial comments on the Governor's speech in the *Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), October 13, 1894. Also see *The Times*, London, October 17, 1894.

³⁹ Quoted by the *Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), October 20, 1894.

⁴⁰ *The Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), September 13 and 21, 1895. Also see the Judgment of J. H. Bonlay, First Class Magistrate of Khandesh, in the "Dhulia Riot Case" in the *Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), October 19, 1895.

⁴¹ See *The Times*, London, of July 1, 2, and 3, 1897. Also see the Report of the Government of Bengal on the riots published in the *Gazette of India*, August 14, 1897.

did not produce any sizeable commotion in the two communities. Perhaps the energies of the potential rioters were absorbed in the "plague riots", breaking out at this time in several places and directed against the Government. This shows that, even if there were no communal riots, the anti-social elements found other violent outlets, a conclusion which is reinforced by the fact that their victims were invariably the poor, mostly hawkers, labourers and petty merchants, too busy with earning their livelihood to want any trouble.⁴² Apparently, it was convenient to slaughter them, and for no other reason except that they belonged to the opposite religion. Moreover, their murder helped to accentuate the communal situation and to make it easier for the rioters to perpetrate loot and plunder.

But the rioters would never have dared to embark on these murderous tasks if they were not encouraged by the creation of the necessary communal atmosphere and the sympathies of their respective co-religionists.⁴³ As the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* once asked in one of the best articles it ever published: "Are we, the educated and better-class of Indians, free from the guilt of these riots?" The journal answered: "Of course we have never used our sticks in the religious riots but we are not sure (are we?) whether we have not used our pens and tongues." Declaring that the classes could not disassociate themselves from the masses, the *Gazette* added that the former "have their share in

⁴² See the statement showing the number of deaths due to the Bombay Riots as registered in the Registration Branch, Health Department, and issued by T. S. Weir, Health Officer, on October 16, 1893. Also see *The Bombay Riots: August 1893* (Reprinted from the *Times of India*), 9-11, 23-24; and *Bombay Riots, August 1893: The Government Resolution and the Official Reports, with Summary of the Trials in the High Court*, 17-19; and *Muhammadan and Hindu Riots in Bombay, August 1893* (from the *Bombay Gazette*), 18, 27, 28, and 39-40.

⁴³ See G. K. Gokhale's "Memorial to the Government of Bombay on Religious Riots in India" (full text in *India*, February, 1895). According to Gokhale "the principal common features" of the disturbances were:

- "(1) that they are confined only to the lower classes of the two communities;
- "(2) that they all owe their origin to religious prejudices and religious prejudices only;
- "(3) and that the conflict is perhaps a necessary incident of the transition through which the country is passing, old customary restraints gradually giving place to new standards of social equality."

the matter and a large share too." For instance: "If the masses fight, the classes write about it and write in anger and bitterness". To illustrate the point, the Aligarh organ reminded its readers of how once, in a tribal fight between two contending factors, the one, which was ultimately victorious, arrested the trumpeter of the other side. "But why do you arrest me? I did not fight against you," said the trumpeter. The leader of the victorious side agreed that the trumpeter did not indulge in the actual fighting but, pointing to his bugle, asked him: "What is that? Of course you did not fight yourself but you sounded the note which sent your soldiers flying at our soldiers' throats."⁴⁴

Some years previously a similar warning to the educated classes was given by the well-known Muslim leader of Bombay, Abdullah Dharamsi. Speaking at the Muslim Educational Conference at Ahmedabad, where both the Hindus and Muslims made a successful effort at communal amity, he emphasised that more than the police or military it was the educated Hindus and Muslims who could prevent the occurrence of riots. "Simply because we did not actually participate in the fighting," he said, "let us not assume that we were guiltless." But for petty jealousies or rivalries, these riots could never break out, Dharamsi maintained. According to him, if the educated Indians composed their differences they would be eradicating the very root of the disease which was eating into the vitals of Indian society.⁴⁵

(B) *Hindi-Urdu Controversy*

As against the riots, which were mainly confined in their actual perpetration to the illiterate, anti-social elements, the Hindi-Urdu controversy was essentially a fight between the Hindu and Muslim intellectuals. Though primarily a language controversy, it roused such passions on both sides that its repercussions on inter-communal relations were grave and far-reaching. It had a marked effect on Muslim politics, making the educated Muslims,

⁴⁴ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, May 16, 1903.

⁴⁵ *The Times*, London, November 20, 1894. Also see an editorial entitled: "A Plea for Conciliation" in the *Times of India* (Mail Edition), November 3, 1894.

already suspicious of the rising Hindu leadership, more apprehensive of their future. As early as 1867 Sir Syed told his superior officer, Mr. Shakespeare, that he was convinced after the anti-Urdu agitation of the pro-Hindi Hindus that there was no hope for any kind of joint action by Hindus and Muslims. Muslims, he said, had to organise themselves on their own to safeguard their heritage.⁴⁶

In order to understand the Hindi-Urdu controversy which, incidentally, was confined to the North, it must be viewed in its historical perspective. Ever since the beginnings of the eleventh century, India was under the rule of the Muslims, but it was not of one kind or of one race. Different Muslims ruled at different times; consequently the different dynasties spoke different languages. The Afghans spoke Pushtu; the Turks from Mongolia, Turki; and the Mughals, Persian. But throughout the Muslim period, the language of administration did not alter much; with slight variations it was the same as the language in which Hasan Maimandi conducted the affairs of the State under the Ghaznavids. That language was Persian and it continued to be the court language till 1837 when Bentinck abolished it,⁴⁷ creating, as Manshardt observed, "a genuine feeling of discontent among the orthodox Muslim masses".⁴⁸

Besides, the soldiers of the Imperial Army, though belonging to different races, also conversed in Persian. In fact, knowledge of the language was made compulsory for them. But while wandering in the streets and bazars of North India they found that Persian was not of much help; through it they could not make themselves understood by either the Hindus or the converted Muslims. Necessity, therefore, created a new language; it was a mixture of Persian and Brij Bhasha, the language commonly spoken by people in several parts of North India.⁴⁹ Soon

⁴⁶ Hali: *Hayat-e-Javeed* (Urdu text), 111-15 (Part I).

⁴⁷ *Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company* (August 16, 1832), General Appendix I, 60-61.

⁴⁸ Clifford Manshardt: *The Hindu-Muslim Problem in India*, 61.

⁴⁹ See Hakim Syed Shamsullah Qadri's *Tarikhe Zaban-i-Urdu* (Urdu text), 17-18. This is the most commonly accepted version of the origin of Urdu; its scientific accuracy, however, cannot be vouchsafed. See the admirable discourses of George A. Grierson on the subject in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. LXXVI (1880), 151-58 and Vol. LXXXIII (1881), 363-77.

it became known as Urdu, which in Turkish means army. As to how, when and where it originated, there are many theories. Grahame Bailey, after analysing them, came to the conclusion that "the formation of Urdu began as soon as the Ghaznavi forces settled in Lahore, i.e. in 1027".⁵⁰

Again Hindi is also not one language; it is a mixture of many local dialects of North India. In its widest sense, it can be said to be the language spoken in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and the Punjab. A great deal, however, is common between Hindi and Urdu—at least much of their grammar is the same.⁵¹ To quote John Beames:

This common dialect had its origin apparently in the country round Delhi, the ancient capital, and the form of Hindi spoken in that neighbourhood was adopted by degrees as the basis of a new phase of the language, in which, though the inflexions of nouns and verbs remained purely and absolutely Hindi, and a vast number of commonest vocables were retained, a large quantity of Persian and Arabic and even Turkish words found a place, just as Latin and Greek words do in English. Such words, however, in no way altered or influenced the language itself which, when its inflectional or phonetic elements are considered, remains still a pure Aryan dialect, just as pure in the pages of Wali or Saudha as it is in those of Tulsidas or Behari Lal. It betrays, therefore, a radical misunderstanding of the whole bearings of the question and of the whole science of philology, to speak of Urdu and Hindi as two distinct languages.⁵²

At first Urdu was only a spoken language but soon it came to be written. Being more used by the Imperial Army, it was naturally written in the Persian script. The Hindus on the

⁵⁰ T. Grahame Bailey: *Urdu Literature*, 7.

⁵¹ According to the famous Urdu author, Hasan Nizami "only those people find distinction between Hindi and Urdu, who are not aware of the beauties of either". Quoted by Dr. Azim Karivi in his *Hindi Sha'iri* (Urdu and Hindi text), 10.

⁵² Beames: *Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India*, I, 31-32.

other hand wrote it in the Devanagari script.⁵³ Moreover, while the former made greater use of Persian words, the latter retained much of their Sanskrit vocabulary. That was how, in fact, the distinction between Hindi and Urdu subsisted and became more and more marked. Under the British the situation became worse by the appointment of Moulvis for Urdu posts and Pandits for Hindi posts. In fact no better impetus was needed for the consolidation of separate trends in the two languages, which had yet to be properly fused into one.⁵⁴

Further, as Urdu began to develop, a literature grew around it. At first it was extremely simple and conversational in style, perhaps because the contributions were mostly from ordinary soldiers. Later, it became highly ornamental, adorned with all kinds of Persian and Arabic expressions. The style also changed; it became artificial and drew inspiration from foreign models. The common, every-day idioms came to be used less and less, with the result that the language became less palatable to the Hindus, though many of them continued to make a deep study of it.

However, in the beginning, Urdu had no official recognition; in fact, not till the reign of Shah Jahan was it accepted as a respectable language. From then on it developed and flourished. In the court life of the later Mughals its position acquired a new high; in Bahadur Shah, the last Mughal Emperor, it found not only a great patron but one of its most gifted poets.⁵⁵

⁵³ However, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "this extreme Persianisation of Urdu was due rather to Hindu than to Persian influence. Although Urdu literature was Musalman in its origin, the Persian element was first introduced in excess by the pliant Hindu officials employed in the Mughal administration, and acquainted with Persian, rather than by Persians and Persianised Mughals, who for many centuries used only their own languages for literary purposes." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, Vol. XIII, 479)

⁵⁴ See the speech of Syed Suleman Nadvi to the golden jubilee session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference held in March 1937 at Aligarh.

Also see C. J. Lyall's *A Sketch of the Hindustani Language*, wherein the author points out that "High Hindi, as distinguished from Urdu, is an idiom of recent growth, owing its literary cultivation in a great measure to the influence of the Educational Department in Northern India, and to the development of a Hindu opposition to Muhammadan forms of expression." (p. 4)

⁵⁵ The Emperor wrote under the poetic name of "Zafar".

Under the British it received an equally great stimulus; the abolition of Persian as the court language gave it an official status in many parts of North India. Moreover, the encouragement that it received at the hands of some British officials and scholars considerably stimulated the growth of a new, dynamic literature; in particular Gilchrist greatly helped the development.⁵⁶ Besides, among British administrators there was a growing fondness for Urdu. As early as in 1842 Lord Lawrence had declared that "the use of this tongue is rapidly spreading among all ranks and is becoming a *lingua franca*".⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Urdu, because of its ineffectual mass following, could not retain unchallenged, for long, its pre-eminent position; soon the British administrators were faced with the question: Which was the language of North India, Urdu as written in the Persian script or Hindi with its Nagri script? Hindus were more and more insistent that Urdu did not satisfy their needs and must be replaced by Hindi. By 1870 they formed several organisations to propagate their views while the Pandits in Banaras started an active anti-Urdu campaign.⁵⁸ The Muslims, on the other hand, were equally opposed to the introduction of Hindi in Courts and Government Departments. They maintained that Hindi was too vulgar and commonplace a language to be given official recognition; it lacked, according to them, both poise and dignity. They denied that Urdu was a Muslim language; it was, they said, the language of both Hindus and Muslims and therefore must be allowed to retain its "well-deserved" position.

At first the British officials did not pay much attention to this controversy; but when Sir George Campbell became the Lt.-Governor of Bengal he went deep into the matter; he was particularly impressed by the conclusions of some of his educational officers who emphasised that Urdu was not acceptable to a large majority of Hindus. According to these officers the real

⁵⁶ For an account of Gilchrist's services to the cause of Urdu see *Sairul Musannifeen* (Urdu text), I, 51-54.

⁵⁷ Quoted in the *Report of the Punjab Provincial Committee of the Education Commission*, 581.

⁵⁸ See "A Lecture on Nagree vs. Urdu", delivered by Baboo Boodhee Bullubh Punt and other proceedings of a meeting of the Nynce Tal Institute, held on August 28, 1869.

language of the Hindus, particularly in Bihar, was some kind of Hindi written in the Kaithi script. The Lt.-Governor, therefore, declared in 1872 that, as an experimental measure, in future Hindi in the Devanagari script would replace Urdu in the Patna and Bhagalpur Divisions, with the exception that (1) where anything had to be written in such documents as processes, notifications, proclamations, bonds and attestations, it might be written in Kaithi; and (2) that the Persian character should be retained for regular office writing, care being taken that the language used was simple and in common use and not foreign and artificial.⁵⁹

The Hindu protagonists of Hindi hailed this order; it gave birth to Hindi Prachar Sabhas in several cities, which demanded the replacing of Urdu by Hindi wherever the former was recognised as an official language. Naturally, this caused much resentment among the Muslims. The *Indian Observer*, an influential Anglo-Indian newspaper of the time, attacked the new order and the motives underlying it. Sir George remained adamant; he refused to withdraw it, despite many protests, though, in practice, he diluted some of the directives. Under his successor, Sir Richard Temple, the order was not so strictly followed, with the result that Hindi could not make much headway. This was resented by several Hindu leaders, not in Bihar so much as in the then United Provinces. In Banaras,

⁵⁹ The reasons which prompted Campbell to take this action have been described by the *Indian Observer* thus: "We believe that the immediate cause of this minute with which he has shaken the Educational Department and 'fulminated' over Bengal, was an address read to him in their choicest Urdu by certain native functionaries during His Honour's recent tour in Behar. This address, which was probably one of welcome and had pressed into its service the whole vocabulary of sweet adulation, has had an effect very different to what its author expected. Unable to comprehend the ornate language of this panegyric, Mr. Campbell came to the satisfactory conclusion that as he himself could not be in fault, the language must naturally be to blame. He objected to be told in what he supposed to be a 'farrago of bad Arabic and Persian' that the moon had broken her neck in gazing up at the exaltation of his horn, and that the sun's face had become yellow with jealousy of the rival luminary of Bengal. . . . Mr. Campbell can tolerate this state of things no longer. The fiat has gone forth that Urdu shall cease to be among the languages of the earth." (*The Indian Observer*, December 23, 1871)

Babu Fateh Narain Singh organised a big pro-Hindi movement, which soon spread to other parts of North India. In this he and his colleagues received considerable help and encouragement from Surendranath Banerjea and his influential paper, the *Bengalee*.

Under Sir Ashley Eden's administration, the subject of Hindi was reconsidered and many European officers advised that a firmer stand in favour of Hindi must be taken by the Government. Hence the orders of the Government of Bengal, dated April 13, 1880, directing the substitution of the Kaithi or Nagri for the Persian character in the courts and offices of Bihar.⁶⁰

Explaining the policy under those orders, Secretary Reynolds pointed out:

The subject [of Hindi] has been under discussion for the last seven years, but the orders issued by Government appear to have been practically ignored. The orders of 2nd April, 1874 and 9th July, 1875, which reiterated previous orders on Hindi and Nagri character in the courts and offices of the Patna, Bhagalpur and Chota Nagpur Divisions, directed that all processes, notifications and proclamations should be made in Hindi; the official records should be kept in Hindi; that petitioners should be received at the option of the presenters in the Hindi or Urdu character; and that a knowledge of the Hindi character should be insisted on in the case of police and ministerial officers.⁶¹

In practice, most of these orders were ignored.

Sir Ashley Eden, therefore, after a careful consideration, came to the conclusion that the changes enjoined by Govern-

⁶⁰ Quoted in the *Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee of the Education Commission* (1884), 399. According to the eminent French orientalist, Professor Garun de Tassy, who was himself a close spectator of this controversy during his visit to India, "The Hindus complain of the Persian character and they find the Nagri preferable. But it should certainly be just the other way, because a man must be very blind through prejudices to prefer, I don't mean to suggest, the beautiful Devanagri character, but the ill-formed current Nagri (Kaithi) to the Persian character, even to *Shikasta*, which is the most difficult to read." (See his *L'Histoire des langues et des litteratures Hindois et Hindoustanis*, I, 5)

⁶¹ Ibid.

ment would never be thoroughly introduced until Nagri (or Kaithi) was made the exclusive official character for Bihar. Accordingly, it was so decreed from the 1st of January, 1881; at the same time the use of Persian character in the courts, except as exhibits, was "absolutely forbidden". Moreover, police officers and amlahs were warned that if they could not read and write the Nagri character, they would be replaced by those who could. Justifying these steps the Government emphasised how anxious it had been to relieve the hardship of the Hindus of Bihar, who had "no medium of inter-communication with the authorities except a character alien to them".⁶²

Naturally, these orders hit hard many Muslims, who, because of the use of the Persian character in the courts, had enjoyed a much greater share in employment as amlahs or mukhtears. Besides, many Muslims were able to make their living as pleaders and touts. The substitution of a new script made their position very uneasy. They, therefore, petitioned the Government not to be carried away by "cheap sentimentalism" and sacrifice administrative efficiency.⁶³ In fact, on behalf of these Muslims, Lord Stanley questioned the Secretary of State in the House of Lords about the relevance of these orders. Lord Northbrook replied that they were promulgated in the interests of the natives of Bihar. Among Hindus, the new orders were widely welcomed. Expressions of gratitude to the Government came from wealthy landlords of several districts in Bihar; as also from the Maharajahs of Boltiah, Dumraon, Darbhanga and Halva. However, to placate the Muslims, the Government emphasised that the new official language was not to be the Hindi of the Pandits but was to admit freely into its composition the more commonly used Arabic and Persian words.

Nevertheless, as a result of these measures, feelings between Hindus and Muslims were greatly strained and the aggressively communal attitude of many newspapers made matters still worse. In order to improve relations, Babu S. P. Sandial, President of the Hindi Prachar Sabha, started correspondence with Sir Syed, who was also equally polite and sympathetic in his

⁶² Quoted in the *Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee of the Education Commission*, 399.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

replies. But the respective stands of the two leaders were so fundamentally different that no solution could emerge. In fact, after the failure of this correspondence, Sir Syed became more bitter and publicly denounced the pro-Hindi agitation: "The adoption of the Nagri character and the Hindi language will greatly injure educated Musalmans in both official and private life. It will in fact be the greatest injury save deprivation of their religion." On his advice, some leading Muslims in the Punjab, to safeguard the interest of Urdu-speaking people, formed the Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Urdu. But for their timely efforts, Sir John Strachey might have followed the same course in the North Western Provinces as his colleagues had done in Bihar. Besides, when Sir Syed learnt that the Hindus in the North Western Provinces also intended to petition the Government for the introduction of Nagri character in courts and offices he immediately convened a meeting at Allahabad which demanded the continuance of the exclusive use of Urdu. For impressing this view on the Government and also for propagating it among the people, a Central Committee was formed with Sir Syed as its Secretary.

However, the appointment of the Education Commission in 1882 gave the Hindus a further opportunity to press for the introduction of Hindi. This time they did not confine their demand to courts and offices; they also urged that it should be universally taught in all primary and secondary schools of North India.⁶⁴ In memorial after memorial, signed by thousands of Hindus, they made it clear that they hated the very idea of their children being taught in Urdu. To quote from one memorial—and this was couched in much milder terms than many others: ". . . Urdu, a hybrid production of mostly Arabic and Persian, was forced upon us by our former rulers . . . but it was never accepted by the people at large . . . No Hindu gentleman would ever condescend to educate his female in Urdu and Persian because the books written in these languages are generally obscene and tend to have a demoralising effect on the character. . . ."⁶⁵ Again, this from a memorial of about 500 Hindu graduates and

⁶⁴ Lala Dwarka Dass, *Hindi versus Urdu*, 2.

⁶⁵ *Report by the North Western Provinces and Oudh Provincial Committee of the Education Commission* (1884), 490.

under-graduates: ". . . alien and upstart language, i.e. Urdu. We emphatically say that Urdu is not the real spoken language of the people of this province".⁶⁶ Apart from such sentiments, every conceivable argument was advanced against Urdu: it was "a pure and simple survival of the old Muslim tyranny in India";⁶⁷ it was too cumbersome, alien and difficult for Hindu boys to learn;⁶⁸ it did not satisfy the religious and social aspirations of the Hindus;⁶⁹ its script was Arabic, which, being the sacred language of the Muslims, would never be touched by orthodox Hindus;⁷⁰ and so on and so forth. The plea, whether in the Punjab, the United Provinces or Bihar, was the same: "If the Urdu language be done away with and our vernacular, the Hindi Bhasha, be introduced in its place, our students will be able to learn it in a shorter time, with comparative ease and greater facility than at present and devote a greater portion of their time to the study of English."⁷¹

As against these efforts by the Hindus for the introduction of Hindi, the Muslims did very little in a systematic way for the cause of Urdu. For instance, while numerous Hindu associations and no less than 58,289 Hindus in the North Western Provinces alone petitioned the Commission in favour of Hindi, only one address, signed by few individuals, claiming to be "the representatives of the Muhammadan community in the Districts of Aligarh and Bulandshahr and the Muhammadan Association of Rurki and Meerut", was received in favour of Urdu.⁷² In the Punjab, however, a better organisational effort was made, mainly due to the initiative of Mr. (later Sir) Fazl-e-Husain; but as compared to the memorials and petitions of the Hindus it was insignificant. Moreover, in this controversy the

⁶⁶ *Report of the Punjab Provincial Committee of the Education Commission* (1884), 558.

⁶⁷ Babu Bireshwar Mittra in his evidence before the N.W.P. and Oudh Provincial Committee of the Education Commission (*Report*, 400).

⁶⁸ Raja Jai Krishn Das Bahadur in his statement before the N.W.P. and Oudh Provincial Committee of the Education Commission (*Report*, 229).

⁶⁹ See the Memorial from the Pandits of Banaras (*Ibid.*, 434).

⁷⁰ See the Memorial from the Meerut Association (*Ibid.*, 479).

⁷¹ Quoted from the Address of the Bharat Barsha National Association of Aligarh (*Ibid.*, 417).

⁷² *Report by the North Western Provinces and Oudh Provincial Committee of the Education Commission* (1884), 419-22.

Muslims tried to make out their case on non-communal grounds. To quote from one of their memorials: "Urdu is not our religious or national tongue. Nor is it imported here from any foreign country. It is the product of India itself. It owes its origin to the joint action of both the Hindus and Muhammadans."⁷³ Besides, they characterised the Hindu memorials for the introduction of Hindi as "nothing but promptings of religious and party prejudices, injuriously calculated to encourage unnecessary antagonism between Hindus and Musalmans".⁷⁴ They, therefore, pleaded with the Commission that "the question of Hindi Bhasha and Urdu or that of the Persian and Nagri characters is no longer such as may easily admit of a general solution or may be supposed to form part of the education question. The fact is that it has now assumed the shape of a political question."⁷⁵ In its Report the Education Commission did not give much consideration to this controversy; in most cases it refused to disturb the *status quo*.

Undaunted however, the Hindus continued with their pro-Hindi agitation. But with the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 the educated Hindus became less interested in the language problem and more concerned about political and constitutional issues. Besides, as the years rolled on, the Congress leaders began emphasising more and more the virtues of Hindu-Muslim unity; they, therefore, refused to encourage any movement which would alienate the Muslims from the Hindus. This policy continued for many years despite the fact that Sir Syed and the other Muslim leaders of North India, as we have seen in a previous chapter, continued to be suspicious of the Congress and openly denounced its activities.

However, in 1898, the leading Hindus of the North Western Provinces and Oudh, under the leadership of some of the pandits from Banaras, waited in a deputation upon Sir Antony MacDonnell, the Governor of the Provinces, who, as a Commissioner of Patna under Sir George Campbell, was actively associated with the introduction of the Nagri character in Bihar. Naturally the deputation was filled with high hopes.

⁷³ Ibid., 421.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

In his reply, Sir Antony, while deprecating any hasty change in the existing practices of the Courts and Government offices, to which the public as well as the officers of Government had become accustomed, admitted that some advantage might be anticipated from the more general use of the Nagri character in official transactions.⁷⁶

Though the reply was not completely satisfactory to the deputationists, they knew that, if they continued with their efforts, better results could certainly be achieved. In this they were not far wrong. About two years later, by a Government resolution, much of their demand was conceded. Though the Persian character was not abolished, the Nagri character was given equal place. Moreover, equal facilities were offered for its use in Courts and offices and it was decreed that "No person shall be appointed, except in a purely English office, to any ministerial appointment henceforward unless he can read and write both the Nagri and Persian characters fluently."⁷⁷

Naturally, this infuriated the U.P. Muslims considerably; the new order not only hit them economically but also culturally. They could bear the abolition of Urdu in Bihar but to strike against it in its very home—the United Provinces—was too much. Besides, they felt the blow rather intensely because it came so soon after the death of Sir Syed; somehow they believed that if he had been alive such a disaster would never have befallen them. The anger and pathos that surged in their breast were thus summarised in an editorial by the *Moslem Chronicle*:

Against the united voice of a people, against the convincing arguments of the learned, against the most obvious and palpable reasonings of grammar and orthography, against all considerations of refinement and culture, against the most commonsense view of propriety, an edict such as the introduction of a jargon which was till now confined to the library of the Banniahs and Modis, is being thrust down the throats

⁷⁶ For full text of MacDonnell's reply to the deputation which waited on him on March 9, 1898, at Allahabad, see the *Pioneer*, March 10, 1898.

⁷⁷ See the resolution of the Government of the N.W.P. and Oudh on the subject published in the *Government Gazette*, North Western Provinces and Oudh, Part VI, April 21, 1900.

of an unwilling people with the imprimatur of authority. Pestered and petitioned by a reckless clique, whose prejudice is stronger than its education or intelligence, whose fad is more powerful than good sense, and whose race-feelings are more potent than culture or enlightenment, the model satrap of the North West has allowed the fiat to go forth that the polished language in which Ghalib sang and Soada spoke should make way, as the court language, for the patois that was honoured till long, no more than yellow dried palm leaves. The question of Urdu *vs.* Nagri, it may be said, was a contest between refinement and culture on the one hand and prejudice and barbarism on the other. And if the fiat remains as it is, history will have to tell a vandalic chapter as to how a British administrator by one stroke of his pen dealt a death blow to . . . the cause of culture and refinement.⁷⁸

Soon, resentment against Sir Antony among the Muslims began to mount. He was called "an enemy of Islam" and "a pro-Hindu satrap". Within less than a month after the promulgation of the new regulations, the *Pioneer* reported "considerable dissatisfaction in the ranks of the Muhammadan community".⁷⁹ The Aligarh leaders were forced into action—in fact into a kind of "rebellion", which they had always detested and shunned. This time, however, the matter was too serious to be ignored; and hence, on May 13, 1900, Nawab Mohsinul Mulk called at Aligarh a representative meeting of some of the leading Muslims of Lahore, Lucknow, Meerut, Badaon, Delhi, Bulandshahar, Agra and several other places in the then North Western Provinces. In his speech the Nawab spoke of the "widespread alarm and dissatisfaction" among the Muslims that the Government circular had created but cautioned them that "in all their criticism of the measure and in all their attempts to obtain its modification, they must remember that they were the loyal subjects of a Government which had always the interests of its people at heart and that, though they might look upon the measure as one likely to prove detrimental to their interests, they must also remember that it was actuated by no

⁷⁸ *The Moslem Chronicle*, May 19, 1900.

⁷⁹ *The Pioneer*, May 12, 1900.

hostile intention.”⁸⁰ He, however, admitted that the consequences of Government’s decision might be “most far-reaching and serious. Soon Urdu might be completely replaced by Hindi in Government departments, notwithstanding the ‘optional clause’ of the measure”; and “its ill effects”, Mohsinul Mulk continued, “would ere long be manifest in education, in commerce and in social relations.” He and his colleagues had never believed in any kind of agitation before; they had always relied on the goodwill and sagacity of their rulers. But this, in their view, was a very serious situation and “they were bound by the instinct of self-preservation and by the duty which they owed to posterity to raise their voices in respectful but vigorous protests.”⁸¹

In supporting the Nawab, Theodore Morison characterised the Government’s decision as a “reversal of British policy” which had always been the recognition of Urdu as the official language of those provinces. At the end of the meeting, a telegram couched in polite terms was sent to the Lt.-Governor in which, among other things, he was informed of a proposed mass memorial.

Elaborate arrangements were then made to hold a mammoth meeting of Muslims in North India to protest against the Hindi circular. A Urdu Defence Association was formed and under its auspices pamphlets were issued, funds collected and leading Muslims were chosen as delegates. In this, Muslim landlords of the then United Provinces of Agra and Oudh took a prominent part; so did Muslim pleaders and traders, who believed that the circular hit them no less than their co-religionists in Government’s employ. The meeting took place in Lucknow on August 18, 1900, amidst much enthusiasm and in the full blaze of publicity in the Urdu press.

In his Presidential Address, Mohsinul Mulk, while upholding “the policy of non-intervention in general political questions as laid down by the late Sir Syed”, emphasised that it was “obligatory upon us to endeavour to keep our language alive and if, to our great misfortune, this great meeting and future efforts of the kind fail to save it we should at least have the

⁸⁰ Ibid., May 17, 1900.

⁸¹ *The Pioneer*, May 17, 1900.

consolation of knowing that we have given it a funeral worthy of its great place and dignity and that we have fought for it by every constitutional means in our power."⁸² According to the *Pioneer* this reference to the possible fate of Urdu brought "tears to the eyes of many in the audience".⁸³

No less than ten resolutions on the various aspects of this controversy were passed; most of them prayed for the withdrawal of the "unjust" circular. Then there was the following resolution moved by the famous novelist, Abdul Halim Sharar, and seconded by Pandit Kedor Nath:

Resolved that as the literature of India in general and of Northern India in particular is contained solely in the Urdu language as a result of having been continually patronised by Government and that as it has served the object of keeping the people and Government informed, regarding the intentions of each other, as no other language has done, it is the duty of Government to preserve, strengthen and advance this ancient literature particularly in these provinces which are its centre.⁸⁴

Further, it was decided that a deputation would present to the Lt.-Governor a memorial "embodying facts and arguments in support of the foregoing resolutions". Steps were also taken towards the formation of a permanent association "to defend and advance the Urdu language"; but it was not until 1903 that the Anjuman-e-Taraqui-e-Urdu was founded with T. W. Arnold as its President and Shibli Nomani as its Secretary.⁸⁵

However, all these moves on the part of the Muslim leaders only made the Lt.-Governor more angry and hostile. Far from inducing him to withdraw the order, they led him to take a firmer stand on the issue. In his speech at Banaras, Sir Antony described the agitation as "fomented" by "some Muslims", declared it to be unreasonable and mischievous and expressed

⁸² Ibid., August 23, 1900.

⁸³ Ibid., August 18 and 19, 1900.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Also see Nawab Muhammad Hayat Khan's questions and the Hon'ble Mr. Rivaz's answers on this controversy in the *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General of India*, (1900).

⁸⁵ Shibli, *Annual Report of the Anjuman-e-Taraqui-e-Urdu* (Urdu text), 1903.

his pleasure at the fact that Kunwar Ali Khan, "the most respectable Muhammadan Zamindar"⁸⁶ had decided to resign the presidentship of the Urdu Defence Association after the Lt.-Governor had "convinced" him that he (i.e. the Nawab) was misled in this matter. That was, indeed, a big blow to the agitators—to be deprived of the leader, right in the thick of the battle. Sir Antony's next step was to force Mohsinul Mulk to sever all his connections with the Urdu movement. At first the latter refused to give in, but later, when the Lt.-Governor, during his visit to Aligarh, made it clear to the trustees that Mohsinul Mulk would not be allowed to carry on as the Secretary of the M.A.O. College if he did not give up the pro-Urdu agitation, he had to retreat. This completely confounded the agitators; they naturally lost heart. Moreover, Mohsinul Mulk's resignation was soon followed by many other prominent withdrawals; and, within less than a year, the whole agitation fizzled out, most unceremoniously.

Nevertheless, its repercussions proved far-reaching. For the first time, educated Muslims became conscious of the fact that unless they organised themselves properly their future was in peril. Frantic appeals were, therefore, made for a new approach to the Muslim problem; from several quarters the need for a Muslim political organisation, to safeguard Muslim interests, was urged. Even the erstwhile opponents of such a move found that the urge among the younger generation was too strong to be resisted. Sir Syed's counsels were ignored and the virtues of constitutional agitation were emphasised.⁸⁷

On Hindu-Muslim relations also the Muslim "retreat" had an adverse effect. Already the educated Muslims had become

⁸⁶ *The Pioneer*, August 1, 1900. However, the Hindus were all praise for MacDonnell; in fact Maharajah Sir Partap Narayan Singh Bahadur, while presiding over the annual conference of the Bharat Maha Mandal Sabha, held in the second week of August, 1900, at Delhi, impressed upon the delegates that "we ought to thank him with our hearts". (*The Pioneer*, August 20, 1900). A few years earlier the *Bengalee* had spoken thus about MacDonnell: "Never has there been an official . . . who has so far emancipated himself from the narrow and warping influences which surround the Anglo-Indian bureaucrat or who has evinced such genuine sympathy and appreciation of the aims and aspirations of the educated native community." (*The Bengalee*, January 11, 1896)

⁸⁷ Roy Smith, *Nationalism and Reform in India*, 55.

suspicious of the Hindu leaders and their activities; this episode made them even more apprehensive. Moreover, the glee of the Hindu press on this fiasco was too exuberant not to be noted by the Muslims.⁸⁸ As the *Moslem Chronicle* put it: "It is needless to say that we can think of no other question in recent times which has more to answer for the existence of the bad blood and tension between Hindus and Muhammadans than the egregious language blunder of Sir Antony MacDonnell."⁸⁹ For years, this resolution remained the bone of contention between the two communities; it was fully exploited by interested parties to prevent the fusion of hearts. Even years later, the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* reminded both Hindus and Muslims that "if a single resolution of Government can create discord and disaffection, the inherent weakness of our position as allies and fellow countrymen must be obvious to all. Indeed so badly off are we in this respect that we have often thought that it was more a case for prayers rather than prescription."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ See editorial comments on the MacDonnell circular in the *Hindu*, August 23, 1900, and the *Hindoo Patriot*, August 28, 1900.

⁸⁹ *The Moslem Chronicle*, May 30, 1903.

⁹⁰ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, May 16, 1903.

CHAPTER TEN

Character of Leadership

THE POLITICAL, social and economic developments among the Muslims that I have traced in the preceding chapters, did not involve directly the great mass of the community. They hardly counted in moulding the future. And still, every move affected them and had a deep impact on their lives. A few men, influenced no less by personal than public considerations, claimed to act on their behalf; no one tested their claim and there was no machinery to test it either. But they were undoubtedly influential in the ruling circles and popular among men of status and position in their own community. Hence it is possible that if there was some system of representation they would have been able to establish their claim. In any event, their role in Indian affairs acquired a decisive importance and laid the foundation of the future course of Muslim politics.¹

¹ For an appreciation of this point see G. V. Plekhanov's *The Role of the Individual in History*.

In this chapter I shall try to trace the lives and analyse the thoughts and actions of some of the prominent Muslims of the period. This is necessary for more than one reason. Had these men been of a different mould or come from a different background, our study, in many cases, would have been different. For instance, would not Hindu-Muslim relations have developed differently had Sir Syed actively co-operated with the Congress? Or would not the general Muslim attitude in Indian politics been less separatist had he not worked on the lines that he did?

True, we cannot isolate Sir Syed, or the other Muslim leaders, from the age and circumstances in which they were born; these also played a great part in influencing their thoughts and actions. For instance, the period in which Sir Syed was born and the challenges with which he was later faced (1817-1898) exerted an almost decisive influence on his public activities. He came of a noble family. His paternal grandfather was an *hazari* with the title and name of Jawwadu'd daulah Jawwad Ali Khan; his maternal grandfather was a Prime Minister to the Mughal Emperor Akbar II.² Moreover, as a Syed, Sir Syed could claim in his veins the blood of Muhammad; often he spoke of the Prophet as "my grandfather". Besides, since his childhood he had been under the influence of the Mughal Court—corrupt and decadent though it was. He had also had the honour, while yet in his teens, to receive in person from Bahadur Shah, the last of the Mughals, some hereditary titles such as Jawwadu'd daulah and Arif Jung.

Sir Syed was, therefore, a nobleman not only by birth but also by upbringing. His ancestors did not belong to India; they had come to India during the reign of Shah Jahan. Under Aurangzeb they rose to high positions.³ Hence, though Sir Syed did not like the humiliation of being subjected to the British rule, it was not so much because of its alien character as due to the decline that Imperial Islam had suffered.

However, until the outbreak of the revolt of 1857 he did not show any great promise; his only serious contribution till then

² See Sir Syed's life of his maternal grandfather entitled *Sirate Faridiya* (Urdu text).

³ Hali: *Hayat-e-Javeed* (Urdu text), 14 (Part I).

was the compilation of *Asrarus-Sanadid* or the "Archaeological History of Delhi". This was mainly the result of his great love for Islamic achievements, though he also gives a graphic account of Hindu architecture in the book. Early in life Sir Syed realised that there was no hope of going back to the past; Muslims, he believed, must try to get the best they could under the British. That is why, when Muslims of his class sulked and remained haughtily aloof from the new administration, he took employment, despite opposition from his own relations, with the East India Company. His job was ordinary; that of a *Sarishtadar*. But that did not bother him. He knew that beggars could not be choosers. Besides, his mother, who since he was nineteen was his only parent, guardian and guide, had inculcated in him great respect for authority;⁴ a not unusual training for scions of noble families closely associated with ministerial offices and Court life. Soon Sir Syed himself developed a respect for the British rule, largely due to the influence of Sir Robert Hamilton, who was extremely courteous and kind to the young officer. His promotions to higher posts were also quite rapid and his superior British officers always treated him well. Just before the revolt of 1857, as a *Sadre Amin*, he began to work under Mr. Shakespeare, the District Collector of Bijnore, who took an exceptional interest in him.⁵

In consequence, when the sepoys revolted, Sir Syed's loyalty to the British Raj remained unshaken. Like a loyal soldier, he stood, even at the darkest hour during the revolt, by his British officers, saving, at the risk of his own life, the lives of many British women and children.⁶ The British were, indeed, grateful to him and valued his help. However, being a sensitive man, proud of his Islamic heritage, he could not bear to see the sufferings of his co-religionists in the wake of the suppression

⁴ See Sir Syed's *Sirate Faridiya* (Urdu text), 54.

⁵ In his official communication about the seige of Bijnore during the Mutiny, Mr. Shakespeare wrote: "I have good reason to know that but for the interposition of the Sadre Ameen (Syed Ahmed) especially, the Nawab would have given license to his followers, the result of which must have been fatal to our party." Quoted by G. F. I. Graham in his *Life and Work of Sir Syed*, 22-23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-23.

of the uprising. He rebuked them for their guilt; but was anxious to mitigate their sufferings. In his *Tarikh-i-Sarkashi-e-Bijnor*, which he wrote soon after the rebellion was suppressed, he pleaded with the British to forgive his co-religionists and worked hard to bring about a change of heart in the British towards the Muslims.⁷

To this end, he also wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Causes Of The Indian Revolt*. In this he tried to disprove that the revolt was preceded by any widespread conspiracies or help from any foreign powers such as Russia or Persia. Realising what a cloud of suspicion the participation of Bahadur Shah had brought on the Muslims, Sir Syed attacked the Mughal Emperor bitterly:

Such an imbecile was the ex-king that had one assured him that the angels of heaven were his slaves, he would have welcomed the assurance, and would have caused half a dozen *farmans* to be issued immediately. The ex-king had a fixed idea that he could transform himself into a fly or gnat, and that he could in this guise convey himself to other countries, and learn what was going on there. Seriously, he firmly believed that he possessed the power of transformation. He was in the habit of asking his courtiers in *darbar* if it were not so and his courtiers were not the men to undeceive him.⁸

Sir Syed wanted the British rulers, therefore, not to give undue credence to the Emperor's participation in the revolt and punish the poor Muslims for his follies and faults.

Sir Syed was also convinced that "there was not one of the great landed princes who espoused the rebel cause".⁹ According to him, the rebels were mostly men of the lower classes. "To cite in contradiction of what I say the cases of the Nawab of Jhujjar and the Rajah of Bulubgurh, and other such petty feudations, would show little else than ignorance of the status of the various Hindustani chiefs. . . ."¹⁰ Nor was he prepared to

⁷ See Hali: *Hayat-e-Javed* (Urdu text), 67-8 (Part I).

⁸ Sir Syed: *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, 4-5.

⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰ Ibid.

believe that for the Muslims the "late disturbance" was "a religious war".¹¹

After analysing the various causes of the revolt he asserted that it was the outcome of non-admission of the "natives" to the Legislative Council. Because of this great administrative blunder, "all men looked upon the English Government as slow poison, a rope of sand, a treacherous flame of fire. . . . There was no man to reason with them, no one to point out the absurdity of such ideas. . . ." ¹² He could not say how the "ignorant and uneducated natives of Hindustan should be selected to form an assembly like the English Parliament but whatever the difficulties such a step is not only advisable but absolutely necessary."

Next, Sir Syed busied himself in writing a series of pamphlets called *The Loyal Muhammadans of India*. He did not try to excuse "those Muhammadans who behaved undutifully and joined in the rebellion; on the contrary, I hold their conduct in utter abhorrence, as being in the highest degree criminal. . . ." ¹³ But at the same time he deprecated "that wholesale denunciation against Muhammadans, as a race, in which the newspapers are wont to indulge and which stains the pages of those who have written upon the events of 1857." ¹⁴

Soon after the publication of these pamphlets he founded the Translation Society at Ghazipur in order to bring European literary treasures within reach of the non-English-knowing Indians. On his transfer to Aligarh, it was considerably expanded and renamed the Scientific Society; its organ the famous *Aligarh Institute Gazette* was started on March 30, 1866. The same year he also formed the British Indian Association with the object of keeping the Parliament informed on Indian affairs. He modelled it on the lines, suggested some time earlier by the *Englishman* of Calcutta. ¹⁵

Till then, there was little trace in Sir Syed of non-co-operation with the Hindus; in fact he welcomed their participation in

¹¹ Ibid., 7-8.

¹² Ibid., 14-15.

¹³ Sir Syed: *The Loyal Muhammadans of India*, Part I, 5.

¹⁴ Ibid., Part I, 6.

¹⁵ See the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, May 3, 1866.

his activities.¹⁶ But the pro-Hindi agitation upset him considerably and he began to think in terms of safeguarding Muslim interests. Urdu was so dear to him that he could not bear Hindu attacks against it. In fact, according to Hali, from thence on he gradually became convinced that there was no possibility of Hindu-Muslim co-operation in Indian affairs.¹⁷ In one of his letters from London to Mohsinul Mulk, Sir Syed said this in so many words.¹⁸

After his return from England, Sir Syed gave up practically all other activities and concentrated on Muslim education and reforms. Though, occasionally, he spoke in beautiful terms about Hindus and Muslims being one, his main concern was the unification of the Muslims. For this purpose he thought it essential to keep them away from the "rebellious" Hindus. That was why, in 1883, speaking on the Central Provinces Local Self-Government Bill in the Viceroy's Council, he emphasised the "fundamental differences" between the two communities and upheld the "nomination clause".¹⁹ He was also convinced by then that the Muslims must rely on the British if they wanted to secure their future; co-operating with the Congress would bring on the Muslims a disaster worse than that they had faced after the revolt of 1857. Sir Syed, however, was so worried about the present that his vision of the future, which both the Hindus and Muslims, whether they liked it or not, had to face together, was completely blurred. Besides, despite his numerous contacts with British officials, both in India and England, Sir Syed's approach to politics was essentially non-democratic. For instance, even in his earlier days when he talked of the admission of Indians to Legislative Councils he took care to specify that the selection should not be done by the "mob" for whom he always had great contempt. What he had in mind was choice by the rulers, which naturally would be made from the

¹⁶ In the early days, Raja Jaikishan Das Bahadur, who was the first Secretary of the Scientific Society of Aligarh, was one of Sir Syed's closest friends and co-workers.

¹⁷ See Hali: *Hayat-e-Javeed* (Urdu text), 111-15.

¹⁸ Sir Syed: *Khutoot* (Urdu text), 88-89.

¹⁹ *Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India* (1883), 16-20.

noblest of their subjects. In fact, he had made it clear there and then that he wanted the British to establish the same "communication between the governors and the governed . . . as has always been the custom of the Muhammadans in countries which they subjected to their rule".²⁰ Consequently, when the Congress movement, with its Western liberal bias, began and the middle-class Bengali "babus" started clamouring for legislative representation and questioning the motives of the Government, Sir Syed was somewhat aghast. He was convinced that the British—like an oriental potentate—would crush the "rebels" and he was anxious that his co-religionists should not be subjected to this fate, once again, so soon after having suffered the disastrous consequences of their participation in the revolt of 1857.

Unlike the Congress leaders, Sir Syed had little appreciation of English political ideas and institutions; not knowing English properly, he was unable to fathom their real meaning. His British contacts were also mostly with the Tories. Consequently, he never visualised that the British would ever be made to leave India or even to relax their authority. Of course, as the Congress grew in strength he was rather worried and, at times, painfully amazed at the development. But he ascribed it to British leniency and once or twice even warned the Government against the dangers inherent in such an attitude.²¹ It also convinced him that there were "two conflicting nations" in India, facing each other. He had, however, no solution for resolving the conflicts, save British intervention and goodwill.

Some critics have tried to blame the British professors of the M.A.O. College for Sir Syed's anti-Congress stance; in particular they attribute it to the "subtle and powerful influence of Principal Beck".²² Even during Sir Syed's lifetime some Congress organs harped on this theme; while more than once

²⁰ Quoted by G. F. I. Graham in his *Life and Work of Sir Syed*, 33.

²¹ See Sir Syed's statement in the *Pioneer*, September 29, 1893.

²² See Gurmukh Nihal Singh's Presidential Address to the Indian Political Science Conference in the *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. IV, 382; also see Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan's *Communal Triangle in India*, 58-59.

Lala Lajpat Rai publicly hinted at it.²³ Sir Syed did not care to reply to these allegations; nor did he change his approach. In support of their contention, his critics usually quoted from some of his pre-Beck speeches and asserted that initially he was all for representative institutions and Hindu-Muslim co-operation. Even the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, some years after the death of both Sir Syed and Beck, pointed out how, because of certain unkind words addressed to the latter by Surendranath Banerjea at a public meeting at Lahore, which was presided over by Sir Syed, Beck became aggressively anti-Congress.²⁴ This naturally must have had some effect on Sir Syed also, who was very fond of Beck. But there were many other factors such as the Syed's background, his reaction to the revolt of 1857 and his feudal approach, which militated against his becoming a democrat. Moreover, his friendship with the Lt.-Governor, Sir Auckland Colvin, who was no less intimate with Sir Syed than Beck (who came, in fact, on the scene much later) and the general antipathy of the average British official—all these must have influenced Sir Syed considerably. And this is amply borne out by a perusal of his literary works.

However, it would be wrong to underestimate the role that THEODORE BECK (1859-1899) played in Muslim affairs. In many ways he was the counterpart of Hume. What the latter did for the Congress the former did for the Aligarh Movement. Beck came to the M.A.O. College as its Principal in 1883. At that time he was a young man, barely twenty-four years old, fresh from Cambridge, where he had made a reputation for himself as the President of the Union. Politically he was a Tory. Coming from a middle-class Quaker family, he took great pride in the imperial greatness of his country. Moreover, he had supreme faith in British leadership and believed that, through his countrymen, culture and civilisation would spread to back-

²³ See the Lala's speech in the *Annual Congress Report* (1888).

²⁴ See reference to this episode in an article in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, May 30, 1903.

ward areas; *Pax Britannica* was the guiding principle of his life.²⁵

Apart from his Cambridge connections (incidentally, he was a scholar at Trinity), Beck left Britain when she was at the height of her imperial glory. Besides, when he landed in India he was overwhelmed with joy at the magic spell that the name of his Queen, Victoria, produced on the high-class "natives". No sooner did he meet Sir Syed than he took to him. He was impressed not only by Sir Syed's loyalty to the British Raj but also by that refinement and culture for which Muslim nobility was then so well known. Soon, for the venerable old man of seventy the young Britisher developed respect. In later years, Beck described Sir Syed as "the noblest and most gifted man with whom I have ever enjoyed intimate personal intercourse".²⁶

But for Beck the bonds between the British officials and the educated Muslims would not have been so close; he kept those bonds ever fresh by arranging mutual contacts and by making the two understand each other's point of view. He opposed the Congress because he was more interested in Anglo-Muslim friendship than in Hindu-Muslim understanding. Somehow he believed that an alliance between his people and the Muslims would preserve for ever the British Raj. Also he could never trust the Hindus. To Sir Syed, Beck provided fresh ideas in the fight against the constitutional demands of the Congress. For instance, the famous Lucknow and Meerut speeches of Sir Syed were mostly the handiwork of Beck, as was the Muslim petition to the Parliament in 1890. In fact, Beck played the greatest role in "Britishising" the whole gambit of Muslim politics during this period. He prepared the material with which Sir Syed fought the Congress. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that, but for Beck's initiative and help, many of Sir Syed's political and educational schemes would not have

²⁵ Blunt saw Beck soon after his arrival at Aligarh and wrote about him in his diary of January 19, 1884 as "a pretty little young man with pink cheeks and blue eyes, certainly not an average Englishman; and an average Englishman certainly could not succeed here [i.e. at Aligarh]. So Beck may succeed. He is probably clever." (W. W. Blunt: *India under Ripon: A Private Diary*, 156)

²⁶ *The Pioneer*, November 28, 1887. Also see Beck's speech on Sir Syed's death as reported in the *M.A.O. College Magazine*, April 1898.

flourished. On Beck's death, a contributor²⁷ in *The Times* recorded that "it is gratifying for us as Englishmen to think that an Englishman was found whose generous sympathy exceeded all that Sir Syed Ahmad could have hoped for and that it was from an Englishman that he received his staunch support and most devoted co-operation". Describing how Beck "gave practical form to the generous aspirations in Sir Syed's mind" and how he "first saw the potential greatness" of the Muslim movement, the writer, who knew Beck intimately, said:

Englishmen at home can never realise how much of the work of consolidating the Empire is done by men about whom no despatches or newspaper paragraphs are written, done by men like Theodore Beck who go among the people and win their confidence by sincerity and almost saint-like disinterestedness, men who charm them into loyalty and lead them into the paths of civilisation.²⁸

Among Sir Syed's other colleagues the closest was undoubtedly MOHSINUL MULK (1837-1907). Like Sir Syed, Mohsinul Mulk belonged to the old Muslim nobility; he also traced his descent from the Prophet. On his mother's side, he was said to be connected with the famous Abbaside family of Shaikhapur (Farrukhabad). Moreover, like his leader, he had also joined, as a clerk in Etawah, the service of the East India Company before the outbreak of the revolt of 1857 and remained loyal to the British all through with the result that he was appointed a Tahsildar. In 1867, he rose to be a deputy collector at Mirzapur. Being a brilliant administrator, he earned high praise from Sir William Muir, the Lt.-Governor, who became personally fond of his Muslim officer.²⁹

However, in 1874, he was deputed, on the invitation of Sir Salar Jung, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, as Inspector

²⁷ The article is believed to have been written by Sir Arthur Strachey, a Chief Justice of the N.W.P. High Court, and a close friend of both Beck and Sir Syed.

²⁸ *The Times*, London, September 7, 1899.

²⁹ His real name was Syed Mehdi Ali; "Mohsinul Mulk" was a title given to him by the Nizam, by which, however, he came to be popularly known.

General of Revenues in that state; within ten years, he was appointed Financial and Political Secretary to the Nizam. Subsequently, he was sent for a short time on an official mission to Britain, where he made the personal acquaintance of Gladstone. Mohsinul Mulk served the Nizam till 1893 when, as a result of "the factious designs of some interested persons",³⁰ he had to resign his post. On Sir Syed's invitation, he retired to Aligarh and remained there till his death in 1907, helping the Syed in his numerous activities and continuing these, most faithfully and actively, after the death of the leader. As Hali observed, "By the unanimous consent of the whole community, the mantle of Sir Syed fell on Mohsinul Mulk" because no one understood Sir Syed better and appreciated his worth more.³¹

To Sir Syed, Mohsinul Mulk rendered considerable help, financial as well as literary. Apart from the numerous donations that he made to practically every public cause sponsored by the Syed,³² the Nawab was a regular contributor to Sir Syed's famous Urdu magazine, *Tahzibul Akhlaq*. His articles, which aimed at the social reformation of the Muslims were "written with great research and labour".³³ He also wrote for the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* and infused a new life into it, making it a vigorous organ of enlightened Muslim opinion. He also assisted the M.A.O. College and the Muhammadan Educational Conference greatly; in fact, but for him, these institutions

³⁰ See Natesan's *Nawab Mohsinul Mulk*, 9. Also see the Life Sketch of the Nawab in the "Indians of Today" series in the *Pioneer*, October 20, 1902.

³¹ Hali: *Hayat-e-Javeed* (Urdu text).

However, the question of Sir Syed's successor was not settled all that easily. As J. Kennedy, in his "Personal Reminiscences of Sir Syed Ahmed" pointed out soon after Sir Syed's death: "When a Pope dies, it is generally reported that the conclave of Cardinals becomes the hotbed of intrigues, alliances and cabals. The death of the Syed is like the death of a Pope. Numerous rivals are said to be competing for the post: no one has yet been able to secure the adherence of all the rest." (*The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, July-October 1898, 151)

³² For an appreciation of his financial assistance to Sir Syed, see some of the latter's private letters to Mohsinul Mulk in Sir Syed's *Khutoot* (Urdu text), 29-108.

³³ The expression is Hali's, quoted in Natesan's *Nawab Mohsinul Mulk*, p. 15.

might have suffered considerably after Sir Syed's death. He managed them with courage and tenacity and kept alive the Aligarh Movement, which, otherwise, would have died with Sir Syed's death. He was also responsible for persuading many of the Ulama to toe the Aligarh line.

In politics he was, to the last, loyal to his late chief. With the help of Morison he carried out the old policy and faced bravely the challenges of the times. In this he was not always successful. This was because, though the times had changed, Mohsinul Mulk's approach remained unchanged. For years he tried his best to prevent the educated Muslims from indulging in political agitation; finally, when he found that there was no alternative, he directed it on the most loyal lines. Of the Congress he remained an opponent till the last and during the constitutional discussions of 1906 was largely responsible for organising the Muslim deputation to Lord Minto.

Though Mohsinul Mulk often spoke about the virtue of Hindu-Muslim unity, he believed that it could not be realised without proper Muslim consolidation. "Unless a miracle happens," he once said, "I see nothing which will raise us from the degraded state which we now occupy. It seems to me that the Muhammadans as a nation have been tried before the judgment seat of God and found guilty. The judgment has been passed but I trust that the decree is not an absolute one. . . ."³⁴ His sole consuming passion was to annul that decree in time; for this, like his chief, he regarded British benediction as absolutely essential.

KHWAJA ALTAF HUSAIN HALI (1837-1914) was another of Sir Syed's close colleagues. Besides being one of the greatest Urdu poets, he was also a prose writer of distinction and has given us an authentic "Life" of Sir Syed in Urdu, called *Hayat-e-Javeed*. Devoted to his Muslim heritage, Hali traced his own descent from Ayyub Ansari, one of the early heroes of Islam and showed a certain lack of pride in his Indian ancestry, though his ancestors came to India from Herat as early as in the thirteenth century. By birth Hali was also a nobleman, but more of the spiritual than the temporal brand. From the time of Balban,

³⁴ Quoted in Natesan's *Eminent Musalmans*, 95-6.

the Slave King of Delhi, his forefathers had been the Kazis of Panipat, the trustees of its shrines and the Imams of Iddain.

Early in life, Hali went to Delhi for higher religious studies; there he met many Urdu poets, including the greatest of them all, Ghalib, and soon became his pupil. However, at first, he did not like the unorthodox approach and the free living of his teacher, with his glorification of wine and love. "It was the time", wrote Hali, "when I was intoxicated with religious self-complacency. Of all the creatures of God I regarded only the Musalmans, and of the seventy-three sects among the Musalmans, only the Ahl-i-sunna, and among the Ahl-i-sunna, only the Hanafiya and even of the Hanafiya only those who were the strict observers of prayers and fasting as deserving the salvation."³⁵ But it did not take long for Hali to overcome this narrowness in his outlook though he remained strictly religious in his personal life. Nevertheless, Ghalib's humanism was too deep rooted not to have affected him. The influence of his employer, Shaifia, was also considerable in bringing about some change in Hali's approach.

Moreover, the aftermath of the revolt of 1857, which crushed hundreds of Muslim noble families, made him more realistic and alive to the problems, which his co-religionists faced. He was convinced that, unless the Muslims were thoroughly reorganised, their further degeneration was inevitable. He was shaken by the degeneration that Islam had suffered, sang pathetically about it in his poems, and dreamed of a new Islam to take place of the old. Besides, during his short stay in Lahore, he made, mainly through the Urdu translations of the Aligarh Scientific Society and the Punjab Book Depot, a special study of European literatures. This helped him greatly to understand better the new situation in India, which the advent of the British had created.

Hali's first contacts with Sir Syed were through the former's contribution to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, but later they met personally in Delhi and became good friends. Their friendship proved a tremendous asset to the Aligarh Movement. In a classic passage, Hali thus described his first meeting with Sir Syed:

³⁵ Hali: *Yadgar-i-Ghalib* (Urdu text), 47.

All of a sudden I saw a man of God, a hero among men, going ahead on a hazardous path. Many accompanying him became exhausted and lagged behind; many continued to just trudge along with blisters on feet, almost breathless and worn out. But their leader, that persevering man, looked as fresh as ever. He walked ahead, unmindful of the fatigue and the tired companions and the distant objective. Furthermore, there was something magnetic, almost hypnotic, about the man; a look by him at any object and it was mesmerised. . . . By chance, one such look fell on me. Even though exhausted and frustrated as I then was with twenty years' wanderings, I was drawn to him, almost within an instant. . . . I knew neither the aim nor the purpose (of what I was doing) but a powerful hand was dragging me along somewhere:

The heart that escaped the charms of youthful beauty
Was captured with just a glance by a hoary old man.³⁶

Again, it was largely because of Sir Syed that Hali was inspired to write his famous *Musaddas*,³⁷ which painted in chaste Urdu poetry the rise and fall of Islam. To quote Grahame Bailey, "no single poem has had so great an effect on the Urdu-speaking world".³⁸ To Sir Syed, it was a gift from Allah in the furtherance of his work.³⁹

However, as the years rolled on, Hali did not seem to like his leader relying so much on the British; nor was he happy with some of the interpretations that Sir Syed gave to certain texts in the Quran and the Hadith in order to facilitate the achievement of his objective.⁴⁰ Somehow or the other, despite

³⁶ Hali: *Musaddas* (Urdu text) *Dibacha*, 1-4.

³⁷ As a critic has put it, "Ghalib taught him how to sing: Sir Syed, in what cause to sing." [*The Calcutta Review*, Vol. CXXI (1905), 467]

³⁸ T. Grahame Bailey: *A History of Urdu Literature*, 95.

³⁹ "When God will ask me on the Day of Judgment as to what I have brought with me from the world I will submit . . . the 'Musaddas' I requested Hali to write." (Sir Syed in a letter to Hali acknowledging receipt of a copy of the great poem.) See Sir Syed's *Khutoot* (Urdu text), 166.

⁴⁰ See Hali: *Hayat-e-Javeed* (Urdu text), Appendix V.

his fondness for the Aligarh Movement, Hali could not forgive the British for their "crimes" against the Muslims after the revolt of 1857; of these he was himself an eye-witness in Delhi. Nor did he approve the way the younger Muslim generation was being modernised; as he once told them, "progress" did not mean "imitation".

"Do you know", he asked them, "what it is that does not allow you to prosper? That keeps you down still? It is your absurd imitation. It has made you decadent in religious affairs, as it has robbed you of your initiative and enterprise in every field—trade, commerce, agriculture, arts and crafts. In every walk of your life it has chained your feet. Like the bird whose wings are clipped and eyes blinded, you have neither the power to fly nor the vision to foresee."⁴¹

Again, as early as in 1893, in an article, "Are We Dead or Alive?", he warned them against aspiring to be Government servants. "They have", he pointed out, "no confidence in themselves. They live on recommendations."⁴² As to those not in Government service, he said, they aimed at being leaders, urging "very respectfully on the Government the grant of 'native' rights without as much as thinking about their own duties towards the nation". The "England-returned" ones outshone all the rest. "They think they have the philosopher's stone, which, just by a touch, will transmute copper into gold." Hali felt sorry that though these young men spent many valuable years of their lives amidst a nation, proud, patriotic, active and learned, and still, when they returned to India, they behaved as ridiculous and poor imitators. Nay, some of them behaved even worse, hating their own people and looking down upon them with more contempt than even the English. "The English", said Hali, "call our countrymen only half-civilised; these young men call them uncivilised."⁴³ In similar vein, Hali wrote his famous

⁴¹ Hali: *Mazamin-i-Hali* (Urdu text), 21.

⁴² Ibid., 99-100.

⁴³ Ibid.

poem, *Nange-Khidmat*,⁴⁴ denouncing the outlook and activities of the English-educated Muslims. After the death of Sir Syed, Hali became still more pessimistic about their future. He died in 1914, a broken-hearted man. When he began his new mission under Sir Syed, he little realised that it would bear such bitter fruit.

MOULVI NAZIR AHMAD of Delhi (1831-1912) was of a different outlook; he was proud that the young Muslims were acquiring a British touch.⁴⁵ Perhaps that was the reason for the great influence that he exercised on Sir Syed. The Moulvi was versatile. He excelled in many fields—education, literature, social service and business. However, he is famous for his literary achievements, particularly his novels; he was, to use C. F. Andrews's words, "the leading Urdu prose writer and novelist of the nineteenth century and world famous on account of his profound Arabic learning".⁴⁶ By birth, the Moulvi belonged to a spiritual order; as one of his biographers has put it, he had

⁴⁴ A typical stanza from the poem reads:

ورنہ دن رات پھرین ٹھوکرین کھاتے در در
سندین چٹھیاں دن رات دکھاتے در در
چاپلوسی سے دل ایک ایک کا لہاتے در در
ذائقہ نفس کو ذلت کا چکھاتے در در
تاکہ ذلت سے بسر کرنے کی عادت ہو جائے
نفس جس طرح بنے لائق خدمت ہو جائے

⁴⁵ Defending English education, Nazir Ahmad once said:

"The evils which beset us as a nation have been largely created by our own literature. That literature teaches us falsehood and flattery; it suppresses facts and mars their beauty. It turns baseless hypotheses and conjectures into facts and excites crude passions among men. Others may have merely tasted this poison; I have drunk it. . . . Although in my old age I have succeeded, like a parrot, in uttering a smattering of English, still my outlook has been completely corrupted by oriental learning." See his *Musalmanon Ki Hayat-i-Talim* (Urdu text).

⁴⁶ C. F. Andrews: *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, 38.

from both his paternal and maternal sides "the blood of Kazis, Muftis and Pirs in his veins".⁴⁷ Of this lineage, Nazir Ahmad was as proud as of his scholarship.

Among those who moulded his early career was one Mr. Taylor, the Principal of the Delhi College, where Nazir Ahmad's father-in-law was also a professor teaching Arabic. Taylor induced the young Nazir to learn English but his father would not have it. "He said that he would much rather see me die", writes Nazir Ahmad in his autobiography, "much rather see me a beggar than agree to my learning English."⁴⁸ Years later, he managed to learn English on his own and, with this new acquisition, he translated in Urdu for the Government—the Indian Penal Code and other official acts and documents.

Nazir Ahmad started his career as a teacher and just before the 1857 rebellion became a deputy-inspector of schools. During the sepoy rising, he saved an Englishwoman's life and was handsomely rewarded by the Government. Soon after, he was made an inspector of schools, then a tahsildar and, after a few years, a deputy collector. His rapid promotions attracted Sir Salar Jung's attention and he took him over in the Hyderabad State Service, where, ultimately, Nazir Ahmad became a member of the Board of Revenue. On his retirement, he settled down in Delhi and spent the rest of his life lecturing, writing novels, composing poems, translating the Quran, money-lending and running several businesses.

⁴⁷ Karamat Ullah: *Nazir Ahmad Dehalvi ke Lecturon ka Majmu'a ma Mukhtasir Swanah Umri* (Urdu text), 3.

⁴⁸ Quoted by Uvais Ahmed in his critical study of Nazir Ahmad entitled *Urdu Ka Pahla Naval Nigar* (Urdu text), 10-11. However, he learnt other things in the College; as he explains in his *Hayatun Nazir* (Urdu text):

Broadening the field of information and acquiring independence of views, tolerance and true loyalty to the Government as also the spirit of struggle and high moral qualities: these things which are the good results of education and indeed the necessities of life I learned only in the College. If I had not studied in the College then should I say what I would have been? I would have been a moulvie, narrow-minded and bigoted and un-cultured, unmindful of the call of my own conscience but always on the lookout for finding faults in others . . . an ignorant, foolish friend of the Musalmans. (Ibid., 7)

To Sir Syed, Nazir Ahmad was a tower of strength, specially because of the latter's oratorical powers. There was no important Muslim gathering where Nazir Ahmad was not in demand and which he did not dominate. But he was too proud a man—some critics have even called him “vain”—to follow Sir Syed meekly. As he himself once declared: “I am not Sir Syed's bard. If he be a spiritual guide, I am not his follower; if he be a teacher, I am not his pupil; if he be a rich man, I am not his dependent . . . But . . . I am a man and have sense enough to distinguish between a friend and a foe and to understand the condition of the nation and its requirements.”⁴⁹ Though extremely orthodox in his religious beliefs and proud of his Islamic heritage, Nazir Ahmad was convinced that the Muslims must, in no circumstances, give up their loyalty to the British. He had absolute faith in the permanence of British rule in India; that was why no Muslim leader was so contemptuous of the Congress as he was.⁵⁰

A prolific writer, Nazir Ahmad's books number more than thirty. Most of them are novels, but the rest deal with all kinds of subjects—etymology, law, logic, ethics, mythology, etc. *Ibnul Waq* or “The Opportunist” is among his best-known novels. In it he portrays the life of a young “native” officer, who rises to a high position due to his loyal services during the 1857 rebellion. He moves exclusively in European society, going out of his way to avoid his own relations and friends. One day, however, his European friends have suddenly to leave India, and he is left all alone, deserted and forsaken. A prophetic assessment of the shape of things to come! But a loyalist like Nazir Ahmad must have hardly realised that truth could be sometimes stranger than fiction. According to one critic, the story was more “a faint and imperfect reflection of the author himself”,⁵¹ than a consummation which he could have wished. For he was very fond of the British and cherished their company. They also valued his loyalty and awarded him the titles

⁴⁹ See Nazir Ahmad's *Fitratullah* (English translation), 17-18.

⁵⁰ See in his *Lecturon Ka Majmu'a* the speeches against the Congress.

⁵¹ Saksena: *A History of Urdu Literature*, 286. For a better appreciation of this and other of Nazir Ahmad's novels see Shaista Akhtar Banu Suhrawardy's *A Critical Survey of the Development of the Urdu Novel and Short Story*, pp. 41-65.

of "Khan Bahadur" and "Shamsul Ulama". He was also given the honorary degree of LL.D. by the Edinburgh University.

MOULVI ZAKA ULLAH (1832-1910) was one of Nazir Ahmad's best friends and yet, temperamentally, the two were poles apart. The latter was haughty, proud and reserved; the former, meek, humble and of sweet disposition. Zaka Ullah respected authority; he had almost a divine faith in the institution of royalty and the order of aristocracy. Like his father, who was a tutor to one of Bahadur Shah's sons, Zaka Ullah took pride in extolling the virtues of Queen Victoria.⁵²

Soon after completing his studies, Zaka Ullah took to teaching. From a humble beginning he gradually rose to be a Professor of Persian and Arabic in the Muir Central College of Allahabad. Though extremely popular with his pupils and conscientious in his work, he found time to do a great deal of writing on numerous subjects. According to Saksena, "his published and unpublished works, small and great, in Mathematics, History and Geography, Literature and Ethics, Physics, Chemistry and Politics number more than 143".⁵³ Mostly he wrote school and college textbooks, but some of his works, particularly in the field of history, have become classics in Urdu literature.

Zaka Ullah was a great translator. He translated many English books into Urdu. Similarly, he was a very competent draftsman. Sir Syed utilised his services in both these respects to a considerable extent. Many publicity campaigns for Aligarh School were conducted by Zaka Ullah. He was also an active member of Sir Syed's Translation Society and contributed regularly to the columns of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* and *Tahzibul Akhlaq*. Moreover, Zaka Ullah could be made to write on any subject. Hali once compared his brain to an oriental oil-seller's shop, where one could buy anything at any time. Naturally, as a result of his voluminous output, the quality of his writing suffered. But, for Sir Syed, the special type of talent that Zaka Ullah possessed was an asset for the propagation of his mission. Furthermore, Zaka Ullah being essentially a hero-worshipper, Sir Syed could not have found a better

⁵² See Zaka Ullah's *Victoria Nama*, a panegyric account in Urdu of the Queen and her "glorious" reign.

⁵³ Saksena: *A History of Urdu Literature*, 296.

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The same trait in his character made his loyalty to the British Crown so passionate that he often looked with abhorrence on the activities of the Congress. Of course, he loved India and was a great admirer of Hindu civilisation; he also criticised some of his co-religionists' lack of reverence and affection for their country. "By all means", he once told them, "let us love our Musalman brethren in other countries and feel their joys and sorrow as our own; but let us also love with all our hearts our own country and refuse to have anything to do with those who tell us that we, Musalmans, must always be looking outside India for our religious hopes and their fulfilment."⁵⁵ Besides, though Zaka Ullah never ceased to respect the Hindus, he maintained to the end that "the difference between the Hindu and the Muslim is too great for any permanent union"; hence "we shall always have the need of a balancing power".⁵⁶

Politically the least conservative of Sir Syed's colleagues was the youngest of them all, SHIBLI NOAMANI (1857-1914). He did not believe in the British though he had respect for their authority. His love for India was as sincere as his love for Islam and he had an instinctive dislike for things foreign. Besides, he was unhappy about the role that Britain played in the affairs of Muslim countries such as Egypt, Turkey and Afghanistan; he suspected the British of evil designs against Islam.⁵⁷

While still a child, Shibli came under the influence of Maulana Faruq Chiriyā Koti, a well-known Muslim theologian;

⁵⁴ C. F. Andrews: *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, 96.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

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⁵⁵ Ibid., 111.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 113.

⁵⁷ See Shibli's *Safarnamai-Hisro Shaino Rum* (Urdu text).

at his feet he learnt not only the Quran, the Hadith and the *Masqulat* but also Persian and Arabic classics.⁵⁸ Fully equipped with Islamic learning, Shibli went, at the age of nineteen, to Mecca for the performance of Haj. On his return he became, not immediately but after a few years, a professor of Persian at the M.A.O. College. Here he came in close touch with Sir Syed. Living almost next door to him, Shibli had occasions to see the master practically every day. He admired Sir Syed's work for the Muslims but did not approve of his religious outlook.⁵⁹ From Arnold, for whom Shibli had great respect, he imbibed the principles of modern criticism and historical research. These stood him in good stead while writing some of his monumental works on the heroes and annals of Islam.

Though almost a fanatic in his devotion to Islam, Shibli often displayed great realism. He would have preferred even the worst kind of Muslim rule to that of the British; but he knew that this was not possible. To indulge in wishful thinking was for him a sin; he, therefore, gave all assistance to Sir Syed in organising the Muslims under the British. He even attacked the Ulama and called them all sorts of names for being obstructive. He realised that, however much some of the means might be distasteful, they had to be employed if Islam was to be resurrected in India. Several years later, Shibli was able to bring round a number of leading Ulama to his point of view; in fact, as we have seen in a previous chapter, his was a very vital role in the establishment of Nadwat-al Ulama, which became a centre of the new trend among the theologians of Islam.

After Sir Syed's death in 1898 Shibli resigned from the staff of the M.A.O. College; a couple of years later, on the invitation of his friend, Syed Ali Bilgrami, he went to Hyderabad (Deccan). There he remained for four years, reorganising the Nizam's Educational Department and working for the famous

⁵⁸ See Muhammad Yahya Tanha's *Siyar al Musaunnifin* (Urdu text), Vol. II, 413.

⁵⁹ Soon after Sir Syed's death, Shibli wrote in the *M.A.O. College Magazine*: "The world knows that I had great differences with Sir Syed [in connection] with religious questions. In fact I consider many of his religious ideas and beliefs as absolutely wrong." (*The M.A.O. College Magazine*, May, 1898).

Asafia Series.⁶⁰ On his return from the Nizam's Dominion, Shibli settled down at Azamgadh and plunged himself, as never before, into his literary pursuits. Here he wrote his monumental biography of the Prophet as well as several other important works. Also in Azamgadh he founded the "Darul Takmil", where he coached Muslim students in Islamic research and advanced studies. All through his life Shibli's one great passion was to bring home to his people the true greatness of Islam and the remarkable role that it played in human history.

His subsequent deviation from the Aligarh Movement had much to do with this; he did not like its leaders' complete subservience to the British. Besides, he believed in the Muslims working with the Hindus for the common good. He refused to have anything to do with the Muslim Deputation to Lord Minto. For the same reason he never became enthusiastic about the Muslim League whose "constant refrain day and night is that the Muslims are oppressed by the Hindus and so they must be given safeguards". Asking whether this was politics, he said: "Politics means deciding the mutual relations between the rulers and the ruled and not the petty quarrels of the enslaved among themselves."⁶¹ He also did not hesitate to express his sorrow at the role Sir Syed played in Indian politics. Nature, he said, had meant Sir Syed to be the leader of all India and not just of one group.⁶²

At an early stage of his public life, particularly soon after the 1857 revolt, Sir Syed's most trusted lieutenant was MAULVI MUHAMMAD SAMIULLAH KHAN (1834-1908). He was, as the sub-judge at Aligarh, in fact, largely instrumental in helping Sir Syed to establish the M.A.O. College.⁶³ Like several of Sir Syed's other colleagues, Samiullah was of Turkish extraction. According to his biographer, he was in direct line of descent from

⁶⁰ A series of Urdu works relating to India and Islam, translated by or compiled under the editorship of Syed Ali Bilgrami and others and published under the patronage of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

⁶¹ See Shibli's article in the *Muslim Gazette* of Lucknow, October 19, 1912. This was one of a series of political articles contributed by him to the journal at that time.

⁶² Shibli refused to divulge this, saying that it was "not only unnecessary but even harmful."

⁶³ See Zaka Ullah's *Moulvi Samiullah Ki Swane Umri* (Urdu text).

Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet. His connections with the British were also of long standing; his father having been an assistant to General Ochterlony, one of the early British Agents to the Indian States.

After his early religious training under some of the leading Moulvis of Delhi, Samiullah practised for some time as a lawyer. He was later appointed in one of the districts of the U.P. as a subordinate judge. He soon earned a reputation for his judicial pronouncements and on one occasion the High Court of the North Western Provinces wrote to the Local Government that "the Moulvi is one of the most able and efficient judicial officers in the N.W.P."⁶⁴ In 1884 he was transferred to Egypt on the staff of Lord Northbrook and proved of considerable assistance to the British authorities. On his return, he was promoted District Judge and later District and Sessions Judge. In 1892 he retired prematurely from government service and worked for the welfare of the Muslims. In granting his request for retirement, the Lt.-Governor wrote: "I did not know that you contemplated retiring so soon, but you have earned the right to repose and rest by many years of honourable service."⁶⁵

In the furtherance of English education among the Muslims Samiullah was an asset to Sir Syed. Ripon once publicly described him as "Syed Ahmed's right hand man". However, the friendship between the two men did not last long; it ended soon after Samiullah's return from the Middle East, when, as explained by Hali in his *Hayat-e-Javeed*, he found that Sir Syed gave too much of a free hand to Beck and Morison in the affairs of M.A.O. College. For years the two quarrelled over it in the Board of Management. At first, Sir Syed tried to pacify Samiullah but when the latter demanded that the authority of Beck should be curtailed, Sir Syed refused to oblige. Samiullah at once severed his connections with the College, stopped all dealings with Sir Syed, and devoted the remaining years of his life to founding and helping the Muhammadan Hostel at Allahabad. Sir Syed saw in the establishment of this hostel a move to wean away Muslim students of the North West from Aligarh;

⁶⁴ See the life sketch of Samiullah in the "Indians of Today" series in the *Pioneer*, September 28, 1907.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

consequently, it deepened the estrangement between the two leaders.⁶⁶

In his day-to-day activities Sir Syed received the most sustained help from his own talented son, SYED MAHMUD (1850-1903), who, at the age of thirty-two, became the first Muslim judge of an Indian High Court. Soon he was an outstanding success on the Bench, to be equalled only by Sir Muttusami Ayyar of Madras. According to Sir Whitley Stokes, no judgments in the whole series of Indian Law Reports were more weighty in their contents or more illuminating in their presentation than those of these two judges. "For the subtle races that produce such lawyers no legal doctrine can be too refined, no legal machinery can be too elaborate."⁶⁷

Syed Mahmud received his early education at Delhi and in Queen's College, Banaras. In 1869 he was selected as a Government of India scholar and accompanied his distinguished father to England, where he studied at Christ College, Cambridge, and then joined Lincoln's Inn. In 1872 he was called to the Bar. On his return to India, he practised for a short time at Allahabad. In 1879 he became district judge at Rai Bareli; three years later he was appointed an officiating judge of the N.W.P. High Court and then, after some time was re-appointed to the same position permanently. However, after a few years, he resigned from the Bench. Nobody knew why Syed Mahmud took such a fateful decision but, according to rumours strongly circulating at that time, he was forced to do so by the Chief Justice and some European judges of the N.W.P. High Court, the reason being some suspicion of a personal nature.⁶⁸

This unfortunate retirement had an adverse effect on Syed Mahmud; it not only damaged his legal reputation, so

⁶⁶ See Sir Syed: *Khutoot* (Urdu text), 131-32, in which Sir Syed pours out venom against Samiullah. See also Natesan's *Eminent Musalmans*, 131-42; and a sketch of Samiullah's life in the "Indians of Today" series in the *Pioneer*, September 28, 1893.

⁶⁷ Whitley Stokes: "The Anglo-Indian Codes", xxviii.

⁶⁸ See Sir Syed's comments on his son's resignation in the *Aligarh Institute Magazine*. Commenting on them, the *Pioneer* wrote: "Even the Syed's best friends will probably agree that he would better have consulted his own dignity by preserving silence on a topic in which it was scarcely possible for him to maintain the due balance between the judgment and the affections." (*The Pioneer*, November 30, 1893).

assiduously built, but also caused him in later life much financial worry. Though he practised as an advocate in Lucknow, his heart was no longer in the profession. According to his "devil", Dr. Satish Chandra Banerji, "his habits became irregular; he became incapable of sustained work and his clients fell off".⁶⁹ Nor was he able to do much work for the M.A.O. College, though he continued to be interested in its affairs and even became the President of its Board of Management. He was also nominated to the N.W.P. Legislative Council but somehow, after the High Court incident, the old zest and energy were gone.

Among the many tributes that were paid to him on his death was the following from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, which, though expressed under an emotional stress, gives a more faithful picture of the man:

His general culture which made him as entertaining in society as it brightened up his judicial utterances, his deep and varied legal learning, his eloquence which at times was truly stirring, his robust commonsense, his independence which never failed to assert itself whenever there was occasion for it, his unimpeachable integrity, his breadth of views, and his strong sympathies with the poor and oppressed, won for him the admiration of the profession, the respect of judges and the confidence of public.⁷⁰

Politically Syed Mahmud seemed to be in entire agreement with his father and worked along with Beck and Morison to help Sir Syed in many of his public activities.⁷¹ However, according to Dr. Banerji, during the last years of his life his hostility towards the Congress disappeared. "... I have reason to believe", wrote Dr. Banerji, "that if Mr. Surendranath Banerjea and Mr. A. M. Bose had approached him properly, he might have presided over the annual deliberations of that national body [the Congress]. He once told me at Lucknow that he was seriously thinking about this matter, that he had sym-

⁶⁹ See Dr. Satish Chandra Banerji's "Personal Reminiscences" in the *Hindustan Review*, May 1903, 439-42.

⁷⁰ See the *Hindustan Review*, May 1903, 443-52.

⁷¹ Such as the Muhammadan Educational Conference, the M.A.O. College and the Anglo-Muhammadan Oriental Defence Association.

pathy with the movement, and that he was prepared to accept many of the resolutions adopted at the meetings of the Indian National Congress".⁷² Except for the words of his "devil" there is no evidence to this effect; in case there was such a radical change in Syed Mahmud's outlook, then it must have been due to his grudge against the European judges who nipped his judicial career in the bud. He spent the remaining years of his life in deep frustration and died a broken-hearted and embittered man.

Next to Beck, no non-Muslim had a greater influence on Muslim politics during this period than THEODORE MORISON (1863-1936) who succeeded the former, after his death in 1899, as the Principal of the M.A.O. College. He was with the College only till 1905, and though he held many more important positions⁷³ later, still, on his death in 1936, *The Times* wrote: "But he will best be remembered as an accomplished interpreter of Indian Muslim life and sentiment; he was, indeed, one of the makers of the Muslim renaissance in India."⁷⁴ Morison's role in Muslim politics, however, became more dominant after Sir Syed's death, though he had been closely associated with the latter since 1889 when he first joined the College as a professor. On Beck's sudden death, he stepped into his shoes and, for the next six crucial years, guided the Aligarh Movement as he wanted. On Mohsinul Mulk particularly his influence was tremendous; the Nawab carried out faithfully what Morison advised him to do.

Morison was a member of a distinguished English family, two of his grandparents and his father having been mentioned in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He was educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took a second class Tripos in Classics. In 1885, after taking his degree, Morison went to Nowgong in Bundelkhand as tutor to two minor Ruling Princes of Central India, the Maharajahs of Chhaturpur and Charkhai. In 1889 he joined the staff of the

⁷² *The Hindustan Review*, May 1903, 442.

⁷³ Morison was an Additional Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council (1903-4); Member of the Council of India (1906-17); Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle upon Tyne (1919-29); and Director of the British Institute, Paris (1933-1936).

⁷⁴ *The Times*, February 15, 1936.

M.A.O. College and remained with it till 1905. In the meanwhile Curzon appointed him a member of his Legislative Council.

On his return to England, Morison began to espouse the Muslim cause before the British public; he delivered lectures and wrote to the press. Being well-timed, since the Morley-Minto negotiations on the question of constitutional reforms were then in progress, Morison's utterances carried considerable weight, especially in parliamentary circles. In 1906, Lord Morley, who had known him from childhood,⁷⁵ made him a member of the India Council. No sooner did Morison entrench himself in India Office than he began, according to *The Times*, "pressing the unwelcome advice that in the impending political reforms the Muslim minority should be protected, as they had urged on Lord Minto, by electing their representatives in separate Muhammadan constituencies; and that their allotment of seats should be substantially in excess of their ratio to the general population. Sir Krishna Gupta naturally gave contrary advice and the Council was so sharply divided that Morley stayed the adoption of the proposal only by use of his casting vote. He was compelled to give way in the end, and with Gupta leading the Opposition, he confessed that he could now understand better how it was Cromwell was driven to 'send his councillors packing'."

Here we must end our list of the leaders of the Aligarh Movement,⁷⁶ who, because of their close associations with Sir Syed, managed to dominate, at least till the end of our period, the Muslim political scene. At any rate, their leadership in the North-West of India remained unquestioned; it did not allow any other leadership to rise or flourish. Even after his death, Sir Syed's influence continued to be the most dominating factor in these provinces, which also happened to be the centres of Islamic culture and renaissance in India. Therefore, the role of

⁷⁵ In fact, Morley had received much encouragement and help from Morison's father in his public career. It was because of the latter that Morley was appointed the editor of the *Fortnightly Review* of which Morison's father was one of the directors.

⁷⁶ See an editorial entitled "Reflections on the Aligarh Movement" in the *Moslem Chronicle*, July 30, 1898. Also see the chapter entitled "The Aligarh Movement" in C. F. Andrews: *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, 89-102.

Sir Syed and his colleagues proved almost decisive in Muslim affairs. In this they received not only the active co-operation of the Muslim nobility and the intelligentsia but also considerable help from some British administrators such as Sir John Strachey and Sir Auckland Colvin. In fact, nowhere else were the upper and educated classes of the Muslims treated so well and with so much consideration by the Government as in the North West. On the eve of his retirement as Lt.-Governor, Sir Auckland thus underlined this fact:

A Local Government, as you are aware, has the privilege of making certain recommendations to the Viceroy with a view to obtaining titles of distinction for those who in its opinion merit them. It has also the power of direct appointment annually of a certain number of Deputy Collectors and Tahsildars. How has this power been exercised during the last five years in the United Provinces? Twenty-eight men have received titles of distinction of whom fourteen were Muhammadans and fourteen Hindus; twenty-six men have been made by the Government Deputy Collectors of whom sixteen were Hindus and ten Muhammadans; fifteen men have been appointed Tahsildars of whom nine were Muhammadans and six Hindus. It may be said that as the Hindus in the provinces are more numerous than the Muhammadans preferment or distinction should be granted in numerical proportion. But if we leave out of sight the vast masses of agricultural population and take into consideration only the classes, of whom in such matters consideration is limited, the disproportion almost wholly disappears.⁷⁷

Sir Auckland's successor, Sir Antony MacDonnell, did not have any special love for the Muslims as we have seen in a previous chapter; he, therefore, did not care for his predecessor's policy. But that policy was so well-laid that Sir Antony once publicly admitted that it would not be proper on his part to change it, though he resented it.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Quoted in the *Pioneer*, August 23, 1900.

⁷⁸ *The Pioneer*, August 1, 1901. According to MacDonnell, out of the 249 appointments made by him, 107 were given to Muslims and 142 to Hindus. See comments in the *Bengalee*, August 2, 1900.

However, in other provinces the condition of the Muslims was far from favourable; in fact as time passed, it became worse. Bengal was a typical example where no less than one-third of the entire Muslim population of India resided. Neither in education nor in Government employment did the Muslims have anything like their due share in that Presidency.⁷⁹ In many departments the situation continued to be as bad as in 1872 when Hunter wrote his memorable indictment of British rule; the Hindus advanced and the Muslims lagged behind. It was so not only in Government services but also in the Press, the local bodies and the educational institutions. True, there was some Muslim awakening but not enough to shake off their backwardness. Besides, the Muslim leadership in Bengal possessed neither initiative nor imagination; it was unable to cope with the mounting critical situation. The only exceptions were Nawab Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali who strived hard to organise and educate their co-religionists in Bengal. But unlike Sir Syed, neither gave himself completely to this task. They formed societies, made speeches and issued pamphlets but failed to inspire enough followers to carry on the work. Theirs was like the Dutch army—all generals and no soldiers.

ABDUL LATIF (1828-1893) claimed his descent from the great Arab warrior, Khalid bin Latif, one of whose relations, Shah Azimuddin, left Mecca and came to India during the last years of the Mughal Empire. He settled in Delhi under the patronage of the Emperor and soon became famous for his piety and learning. Later, one of Shah Azimuddin's sons was appointed a munsif in Eastern Bengal and, after a lapse of several decades, his great grandson went to Calcutta and practised as a lawyer at the old *Sadre-Dewani-e-Adalat*. Abdul Latif was his second son.

⁷⁹ The following from a letter circulated among Divisional Commissioners and District Judges by H.E. Sir B. Fuller Gout clearly bears this out:

"The attached table (given as Appendix A in this book) contrasts the share of ministerial posts held by Muhammadans in each district of Eastern Bengal with the proportion they constitute of the population. It indicates that, while the Muhammadans form two-thirds of the population, they hold less than one-sixth of the appointments referred to, and that while in strict proportion to population they were entitled to 2,741 appointments, they actually hold only 647." Quoted in the *Pioneer*, July 1906.

Latif received his early education at the Calcutta Madrasah, where he also learnt English much against the wishes of his parents and relations. As it was considered almost a sin by the Muslims at this time to learn English, Latif had to fight hard to overcome popular resentment.⁸⁰ However, he received much encouragement from some British officials. The Government also granted him a scholarship to pursue his studies.

As soon as he qualified, Latif became a Private Secretary to the Amir of Sind. Then he went to teach at the Dacca Collegiate School; from there, after some years, he was transferred to the Calcutta Madrasah as an Anglo-Arabic professor. In 1849 he joined the Subordinate Executive Service where, after rising from one position to another, he ultimately became a Presidency Magistrate. He retired in 1887. Meanwhile, he was selected as one of the original members of the Bengal Legislative Council, to which he was renominated in 1870 and again in 1872. For his loyal services to the Government, he was made a J.P., a Khan Bahadur, a Nawab and a C.I.E. He was a founder of the Presidency College and for many years a fellow of Calcutta University.

To Latif belongs the credit of being the pioneer of English education among the Muslims of Bengal; he helped to popularise it among the elite of his community. Despite many obstacles he went ahead with his mission through the Literary Society which he founded to propagate it. He also organised many scholarships to help poor Muslims to take up English education. Though an orthodox Muslim, he freely mixed with the British and was proud of his friendship with them. Moreover, he was one of the first among the Muslims to launch a

⁸⁰ As F. B. Bradley-Birt of the Indian Civil Service pointed out:

It was while Abdul Latif was at the Madrasah in the early forties that the study of English after much controversy was first introduced there. But so great was the opposition that the English classes were practically boycotted, the students refusing to be drawn from their Persian and Arabic studies and from the study of the Law which was fast ceasing to be the law of the land. In vain it was pointed out to them that under the new regime a knowledge of English was essential and that the importance of Persian and Arabic and the study of Muhammadan Law was not what it had been.

See his *Twelve Men of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, 116.

campaign against the conception of *Jihad*, and said that it put a brake on modern progress. Latif did not approve of the Congress and believed that it aimed at disturbing the political equilibrium between the various communities, which the British Government had so fairly and justly maintained. Consequently, like Sir Syed, he never missed an opportunity to warn the Muslims to keep away from the Congress and instead concentrate all their energies on learning the English language. His faith in the permanence of British rule remained unshaken to the last. He believed that there was no better or more impartial administration than that of the British; hence he always impressed upon his co-religionists to trust the British and obey their commands.

On his death, *The Times* wrote:

The British Government gave him what it had to give in the shape of titles and honours but it is as a Muhammadan who led forth his countrymen into new fields of achievement and new realms of knowledge, without losing his own orthodoxy, that Abdul Latif has won his place in Indian history.⁸¹

SYED AMEER ALI (1849-1928), held views somewhat different from Latif's on the position of the Muslims; he wanted them not only to be educated but also politically active. Of course, he was no less an opponent of the Congress than Latif but he believed that unless the educated young Muslims were provided with an alternative they were bound to be attracted to the Congress. Latif would not want them to go anywhere near politics except in a purely academic sense; to do otherwise, he said, would be just like letting children play with fire. Consequently, there was at no time any unity of thought or action between the two Bengali leaders. They were also not fond of each other, with the result that the two worked in different directions, sometimes even in opposition and wasted more energies in fighting each other than in any constructive work.⁸²

Ameer Ali's *Memoirs* begin with a significant passage: "We trace our descent", he writes, "from the Prophet through his

⁸¹ *The Times*, September 4, 1893.

⁸² For an appreciation of the acute differences and jealousy between Abdul Latif and Ameer Ali see W. S. Blunt's *India under Ripon: A Private Diary*, 97-100.

daughter Fatima. Our ancestor, the eighth apostolic Imam, Ali surnamed Al Raza, is buried at Meshed, the principal city of Khorasan in N.E. Persia."⁸³ In fact, one of his forebears held an important office under the great Persian King, Shah Abbas II. From him in direct line descended one Ahmed Fazil, a soldier, who came to India with Nadir Shah; after the invasion Fazil stayed behind and settled down in Delhi. Soon his son obtained employment under the Nawab of Oudh. He had a son named Saadat Ali, who, however, came to Bengal shortly before the annexation of Oudh.⁸⁴

Ameer Ali, who was the son of Saadat Ali, had his English education at the Hooghly College, where in 1869 he took the M.A. degree in Politics and Economics; the following year he qualified for the B.L. with honours. "In those days," writes Ameer Ali, "there was no bitterness between Hindus and Muslims. They both lived and worked together in complete amity and concord; there were no disputes about processions before mosques during worship, nor any obnoxious parade of the sacrifice of calves or cows during what is commonly called the Bakr Id festival. . . . The apple of discord between Hindu and Muslim in the shape of 'communal representation' had not yet fallen between them, and there was no attempt to drive the voters of both communities to a common 'hustings'. One side was not animated by the ambition of dominance, nor was the other possessed with the fear of subordination. I had many friends among my Hindu comrades."⁸⁵

After practising for a year as a High Court vakil in Calcutta, Ameer Ali left on a Government of India scholarship for London where, after three years, he was called to the Bar. On his return he restarted legal practice in Calcutta and taught Muhammadan Law at the Presidency College. Soon he was appointed a Presidency Magistrate and then a Chief Presidency Magistrate. Meanwhile, in 1883, Lord Ripon nominated him to his Legislative Council; seven years later he was elevated to the

⁸³ Ameer Ali: "Memoirs", in *Islamic Culture*, October 1931, 513.

⁸⁴ According to Shumbhoo Chunder Day "Saadat Ali came to Bengal while it was still a Dutch possession." See his article on Ameer Ali in the *Hindusthan Review*, November 1903, 418-29.

⁸⁵ Ameer Ali: "Memoirs" in *Islamic Culture*, October 1931, 525.

Bench of the Calcutta High Court—the second Muslim to be so honoured, the first being, as we have noted earlier, Syed Mahmud.

As a judge, Ameer Ali made a great impression; especially his judgements on Muhammadan Law were lucid and respected for their erudition and clear exposition of legal intricacies. Often they were relied upon by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. He was also a brilliant writer with a good command over the English language. Apart from his unique contribution to modern Islamic literature, his law books were also commended as authorities on their respective subjects.⁸⁶

In 1904, Ameer Ali left India and, along with his English wife, whom he had married during his earlier visit to the British Isles, settled down in a historic manor in Berkshire.

Ameer Ali was a many-sided man. His religious role I have already discussed at length in a previous chapter; I have also referred, at relevant places, to some of his political activities. Though a great admirer of the British connection, he often deplored the lack of sympathy that existed between the rulers and the ruled. He was also a critic of those officials who lived in an atmosphere "charged with pre-conceived theories of racial inequality and the unwisdom of relaxing the bonds of tutelage".⁸⁷ In consequence, he never opposed the demand for the wider application of the principles of representative institutions or the appointment of Indians to executive offices. But he always maintained that these had to be conditioned by the peculiar characteristics of India. Of joint electorates, therefore, he remained to the last a fierce and uncompromising opponent. He warned the British: "A Muhammadan sovereign tried to fuse the two people by introducing a new electoral system. He failed. Do you think it possible to attain that end by driving them in common to the hustings?"⁸⁸ During the regime of Lord Hardinge, who was a great supporter of joint electorates, the Congress, through Jinnah, even offered him the Presidentship

⁸⁶ Among the more prominent of Ameer Ali's legal works are: *Muhammadan Law*, 2 Vols; *Law of Evidence as Applicable to British India*; *Civil Procedure in British India*; and *A Commentary on the Bengal Tenancy Act*.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Natesan's *Eminent Musalmans*, 159.

⁸⁸ Quoted by him in his "Memoirs" in *Islamic Culture*, July 1932, 337.

if he would give up his separatist demands. Ameer Ali, however, declined the offer and stuck to his communal approach. He believed that without communal representation, the Muslims would be "tied to the juggernaut of majority" and "in the end crushed out of all semblance of authority".⁸⁹

The only other Muslim leaders, who played any significant role in Indian affairs during the period under review, were those of Bombay and Madras, the two presidencies which lay in the other half of India. Of course, there were a few local leaders in the Punjab such as SHAH DIN, MUHAMMAD SHAFI and FAZL-I-HUSAIN but they were yet to assume an all-India importance; then there were men like SHARIFUDDIN, SYED ALI IMAM and MAZHER-UL HAQUE in Bihar but their influence also did not extend beyond the confines of their own province. Sind had hardly a Muslim leader worth the name; and in the rest of the provinces the position was no better.

Among the Muslim leaders of Bombay the foremost was undoubtedly BADRUDDIN TYABJEE (1844-1906). A member of the Bohra sect, his father was a wealthy merchant, having an extensive foreign trade. Besides, he had close connection with the local Hindu businessmen and was popular with the rising Hindu intellectuals. Though intensely religious, Tyabjee's family had no qualms about mixing with their Hindu neighbours and friends. From his childhood, therefore, Badruddin was brought up in a cosmopolitan environment; he had both Hindus and Muslims as friends and saw no reason to make any distinction between them.⁹⁰

Tyabjee received his early education in a maktab, where he was taught how to read the Quran and given a smattering of Persian and Urdu; subsequently he studied English at the Elphinstone Institution. Soon he was taken to France for treatment of a serious eye complaint. After the cure, instead of going back home, he went to London and studied law. He was called to the Bar in 1867. On his return he set up a practice at the Bombay High Court; in this he was greatly helped by his brother Camruddin who was one of the first Muslim solicitors

⁸⁹ Quoted in Natesan's *Syed Ameer Ali*.

⁹⁰ See the life-sketch of Tyabjee in the "Indians of Today" series in the *Pioneer*, December 6, 1902.

in India. Law, being a jealous mistress, Tyabjee had to work hard for many years before making a mark in the profession. By 1880, his reputation was established and he came to be recognised as one of the leading lawyers in Bombay. It was then that he turned to politics. Those were the days of the fiscal controversy in India and his first public utterance was against the abolition of the import duties on Manchester goods. Moreover, because of his close association with Mehta, Telang and Ranade, he was pained by the sectarian outlook of Sir Syed and lost no opportunity in urging upon his community that Hindus and Muslims, being the children of the same soil, had to stand united on all public issues. This, he said, was not only in their joint interests but also in that of the British.⁹¹

Being an effective speaker, Tyabjee soon became popular among the educated and politically conscious circles. Invitations came to him from different parts of India and, during those days, he did much public speaking. However, he was no orator. As *The Times* observed: "His public utterances were the more convincing and powerful because they were marked by logical argument, suitably expressed. . . ."⁹²

Meanwhile, in 1882, Sir James Fergusson, the Governor of Bombay, nominated him to his Legislative Council; in 1887 he was the first Muslim to be chosen Congress President. In his presidential address Tyabjee laid stress on the representative character of the Congress, asserted its loyalty to the Crown and declared that it was false to suggest that the Muslims were against the Congress.⁹³ In 1895 Tyabjee retired from the Congress as also from all political activities because he was raised to the Bench of the Bombay High Court. Nevertheless, in his spare time, he devoted himself to educational and social work among the Muslims, his crowning achievement being the establishment of the Anjuman-e-Islam in Bombay, of which he was at first a Secretary and later became the President. Through this organisation, with its accessories of schools, hostels, a gymnasium and a club, he not only helped in popularising English education among the Muslims but also initiated many

⁹¹ See Natesan's *Badrudin Tyabjee*.

⁹² *The Times*, August 21, 1906.

⁹³ *Annual Congress Report* (1887), 72.

social reforms in the community. He was also a great champion of female education and was one of the first, if not *the* first, among Muslim leaders to allow their daughters to come out of the purdah.⁹⁴ Moreover, Tyabjee was largely responsible for establishing such modern social centres for the Muslims as the Islam Club and the Islam Gymnasium (now Gymkhana) in Bombay. A sportsman by nature, he is said to have been very fond of playing badminton and tennis.

In his later life, when the Congress became aggressively and all too exclusively political, Tyabjee felt rather unhappy about it. "I am afraid", he said, "that young India has fixed its attention too exclusively on politics and too little upon education and upon social reform. I am one of those who think that our improvement and progress lies not in our efforts simply in one direction but in various directions, and that we ought to move side by side for the purpose of improving our social status and our educational status quite as much as our political status. It is no use labouring together for a representative government of a very advanced type if the majority of our countrymen are steeped in ignorance."⁹⁵

On his death, P. Anandacharlu, who later became a Congress President, wrote: "Thus to the last day of his earthly sojourn his was a career of sturdy honesty, of unflinching manliness, and of a patriotism, on which no narrow pietistic, sectarian considerations could put any check."⁹⁶

RAHIMTULLA MOHAMED SAYANI (1847-1902), the second Muslim to become a Congress President, was also from Bombay. Like Tyabjee he also came from a business family. His father was one of the leading merchants in Cutch State. A Khoja by birth, he followed faithfully the tenets of the particular sect of Islam to which he belonged.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ For an appreciation of Tyabjee's efforts in the cause of female education see Shaikh Abdul Qadir's paper on "Young India—Its Hopes and Aspirations" in the *Journal of the East India Association*, April 1906, 62-63.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Natesan's *Eminent Musalmans*, p. 109.

⁹⁶ See his article, "Bonnerji, Tyabji and Bose", in the *Indian Review*, September 1906, 654-55.

⁹⁷ See Natesan's *Rahimtulla Mohamed Sayani*. Also see life sketch of Sayani in the "Indians of Today" series in the *Pioneer*, October 27, 1896.

Quite early in his life, Sayani started learning English, much to the consternation of his family and the annoyance of other Khojas. Time and again he was persuaded to give up this "sinful" practice but he remained firm. He passed one examination after another, winning several prizes and scholarships, till, in 1868, he obtained the M.A. degree. Sayani was not only the first Muslim to achieve such distinction but continued to be the solitary recipient of these awards for the next twenty-five years. This was, indeed, a unique achievement. His principal, Sir Alexander Grant, always spoke in high terms about his brilliance and scholarship.

After taking his Bachelor of Laws degree in 1869, Sayani became a J.P. Soon he qualified as a solicitor and joined the firm of Camruddin Tyabjee, the brother of Badruddin. Some years later he helped in forming the famous firm of Payne, Gilbert and Sayani. He was a great success in the legal profession and was respected equally at the Bar and by the Bench.

Sayani was first elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1876; he remained its member till his death in 1902. In 1888, he was elected the President (as the Mayor was then called).⁹⁸ The same year, he was also nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council. In 1896, he presided over the twelfth annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta. In his presidential speech he presented a reasoned appeal to his co-religionists to give up their antagonism to the Congress. He was certain that, if the Muslims joined the Congress, they would receive from it all the legitimate assurances that the peculiar condition of their community needed. Opposition would not harm the Congress, he said; it would only slow down the pace of Muslim progress. In the Imperial Legislative Council, on which he sat for two years on behalf of the non-official members of the Bombay Legislative Council, he always took a non-communal view of the many problems that came under discussion and his work there was highly spoken of by the then Viceroy, Lord Elgin.

⁹⁸ In fact it was during Sayani's presidentship that the Bombay Municipal Corporation approached the Government with the suggestion that the President be allowed to be styled the Lord Mayor of Bombay and also that he might be invested, like the Lord Mayor of London, with golden badge and the chain of office.

Commenting on his death the *Bengalee* remarked: "Mr. Sayani was one of the foremost Indians of his day . . . a true son of India—one whose heart pulsed with the noble impulses of patriotism and generous fellow-feeling".⁹⁹ The *Times of India* wrote:

He was one of the few Muhammadans who honestly believed that the followers of Islam would, in the near future, be able to hold their own with the other races in intellectual competition, and he was not afraid that they would be left far behind in the race if the Western methods of administration and recruitment in the public service were more largely adopted in this country.¹⁰⁰

Though in the all-India context Tyabjee and Sayani were in a minority among the Muslims, their hold on Western India was unchallenged. Even during the Bombay riots of 1893 these two leaders were able to see that the cordial relations between the educated Hindus and Muslims were not disturbed. So great was their influence in Bombay that, as late as in 1903, when the Muhammadan Educational Conference met in Bombay, Tyabjee, despite his critical attitude towards Sir Syed in the past, was asked to preside over it. In his presidential address, as we have noted in an earlier chapter, Tyabjee not only reasserted his loyalty to the Congress but urged upon the delegates to shed sectarianism in politics and work with the Hindus.

Several years after their deaths, D. E. Wacha, a Congress President, said of the two Muslim leaders:

Both were advanced Muhammadans of great culture, eminent public spirit and independence and withal gifted with true political insight of a high order. Broadminded as they were and free from all narrow and racial prejudices they were able in inculcating a spirit of tolerance among their own backward co-religionists and exhorting them to share in the deliberations of the Congress, fully convinced that the political welfare of the two great Indian communities could only be brought to a successful issue when they co-operated together for the common object. They were the advanced

⁹⁹ *The Bengalee*, June 8, 1902.

¹⁰⁰ *The Times of India* (Overland Weekly Edition), June 7, 1902.

guards among the educated Muhammadans of their respective days carrying aloft the standard of the Indian National Congress. . . .¹⁰¹

The situation in South India, particularly Madras, was not much different from that in Bombay. There also, due to Mir Humayun Jah and later, his talented and better-known son, NAWAB SYED MOHAMMED (died 1919), the Congress was quite popular among the influential and educated Muslims. Towards the expenses of its first Madras session held in 1887, over which Tyabjee presided, Humayun Jah liberally contributed; he also helped the Reception Committee in several other ways.¹⁰² In 1903, when the Congress again met in Madras, his son, Syed Mohammed, was in charge of all the arrangements and acted as the Chairman of its Reception Committee. In 1913, when the Congress held its annual session in Karachi, he was elected the President—the third Muslim to be so honoured.

Syed Mohammed came of the same great family in South India which had produced Tipu and Haider Ali in the past. Socially, therefore, he was highly respected in all circles. His father, Mr. Humayun Jah, had already established good relations with the British; for several years he served on the Madras Legislative Council as a nominated member. Because of his royal connections, he was much sought after by the Brahmins and other influential Hindus.

Syed Mohammed began life in extremely favourable conditions. Being himself of no mean intelligence he soon made the best of the many opportunities that came his way. Besides, his father gave him a good English education and since childhood put him in touch with some of the best European and Hindu circles in Madras. In 1896, the Government, in recognition of his public services to the city, appointed him Sheriff of Madras. He was the first Muslim to be so honoured.

From his student days, Syed Mohammed was interested in politics and attended the various meetings organised by the Congress leaders in Madras. Influenced by the latter's

¹⁰¹ *Annual Congress Report* (1913), 1-2.

¹⁰² For an appreciation of Mir Humayun Jah's help to the Congress see the editorial entitled, "The Congress and the Madrasis", in the *Indian Mirror*, January 14, 1888.

approach to Indian problems, he also began to advocate, quite early in his public career, the need for political unity among the Hindus and Muslims. "United we stand; divided we fall": was the theme of his Address of Welcome to the Madras Congress in 1903. For the same reason, he refused to join the Muslim Deputation to Lord Minto in 1906. He told its sponsors when they invited him to be a party to the Address that he would gladly do so if they deleted from it their demand for separate communal representation.¹⁰³ To this they naturally could not agree because, as the Viceroy later pointed out, that was "the pith of your Address".¹⁰⁴ Syed Mohammed, therefore, despite great pressure from Mohsinul Mulk and others, did not participate in that historic event, even though at that time he happened to be in Simla, having gone there to attend the Viceroy's Legislative Council of which for several years he was a member.¹⁰⁵ Later in December, when the Muslim League was formed in Dacca, he expressed his disassociation with the move by presiding, at the same time in Calcutta, over another Muslim gathering convened to emphasise the identity of political interests between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Never in his long public life did Syed Mohammed ever align himself with any narrow, sectarian Muslim movement in Indian politics. He died in 1919 when it was the hey-day of Hindu-Muslim unity. In his tribute to Syed Mohammed, Pandit Motilal Nehru, as President of the Congress, rightly laid stress on the fact that even when the slogan of unity was not so popular among the Muslims the departed leader worked untiringly for that ideal.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ See the Nawab's interview to the correspondent of the *Indian Daily News* as quoted by the *Bengalee*, October 4, 1906.

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix E: "Minto's Reply".

¹⁰⁵ According to the *Pioneer*: "The gentleman who represents Madras in the Viceroy's Legislative Council was, it is true, in Simla at the time; and he had even been named in the newspapers as the head of the deputation, but at the last moment he did not think fit to accept the memorial as finally drafted." (*The Pioneer*, November 5, 1906).

¹⁰⁶ *Annual Congress Report* (1919), 10.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Conclusions

THIS STUDY of the Muslims in India at the most formative stage of their development on the eve of the twentieth century is as exhaustive as I could make it. Being essentially a political analysis it cannot be a comprehensive survey of every aspect of their life. Nonetheless I have taken stock of Muslim activities in several important fields, especially when these had any impact on their political outlook. Superficially, the treatment of the different aspects of Muslim awakening may appear somewhat disjointed but there is a strong thread of continuity running through it. This continuity has revealed certain conclusions which are substantially corroborated by both facts and circumstances. True, these conclusions can at best be surmises; but they are helpful in our understanding of the rise of Muslims in Indian politics, particularly of the manner in which

this rise took place and the consequences to which it subsequently led. In this chapter I shall attempt a summary of some of the most important of these conclusions:

First, there was a substantial difference between the Hindus and the Muslims not only in time but also in character in regard to the imparting of English education, which was the main concern of the rising generation of that period. Due to this difference, the contacts of the two communities with the West also assumed different dimensions. The Hindus took to liberal ideas; the Muslims drew comfort from time-honoured, aristocratic values. Psychologically, this made the new education, despite its seeming similarity in curricula, much less broad-based for the Muslims than it was for the Hindus. Besides, in order to allay Muslim fears, the British officials, impressed by Sir Syed's loyalty and work, became over-sensitive to Muslim reactions and prejudices. Hence the many attempts made by them to respect Muslim religious and social susceptibilities which, instead of weakening, strengthened the old structure of their society and perpetuated their particular pattern of living.

Then there was Sir Syed, who, for almost the whole of the period under review, dominated the Muslim scene. He was, no doubt, a pioneer of many modern movements among his co-religionists; he rationalised religious thinking; he simplified Urdu writing; he brought the treasures of English literature within the reach of the Muslim intelligensia; he fought against the bigotry of the Ulama; he emphasised the role of modern education in national emancipation; but, with all these achievements, he remained to the last an aristocrat in his approach, feudal in his outlook, and fearful of popular participation in any movement, which might become uncontrollable. Moreover, unlike his Hindu counterpart, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed looked upon the new education more as a means to State employment and as a loyal link between his people and the British Raj than of modernising the society to which he belonged, modernising not in a superficial sense but in terms of the liberal and scientific forces that the times had unleashed. As Hali reveals in his biography of Sir Syed, until the last, the founder of the M.A.O. College remained an opponent of technical education and opposed its introduction among the Muslims. Beck, his close associate, had pointed this out in a letter

to the *Pioneer* as early as 1891.¹ The result was that, despite so much talk of modernism, the awakening among the Muslims was restricted and did not generate the type of reforms which had begun to touch many aspects of the life of the Hindus and to reorientate their social outlook. The Muslims, even the more modern among them, continued to stick to the past; consequently their adjustment to the changed circumstances became rather a prolonged, laborious and often unimaginative process.

Sir Syed traced this backwardness to four causes: (1) political traditions; (2) social customs; (3) religious beliefs; and (4) poverty. As he explained:

The Muhammadans were proud of their socio-political position and their keeping aloof from English education may in some measure be ascribed to the fact that the Government colleges and schools included among their pupils some of those whom the Muhammadans, with an undue pride and unreasonable self-conceit and vanity, regarded with social contempt. They could never be brought to admit that sound and useful learning existed in any languages except Arabic and Persian. They had given a peculiar form to moral philosophy, and had based it on religious principles, which they believed to be infallible; and this circumstance had dispensed, as they thought, with the necessity of European science and literature. I still remember the days when, in respectable families, the study of English, with the object of obtaining a post in Government service or of securing any other lucrative employment, was considered highly discreditable. The prejudice has now, however, much slackened.²

Again, the Muslims who took to English education were mostly from the old feudal families or landed gentry. Having suffered greatly, especially the loss of power and positions, they were, on the one hand, over-cautious—and sometimes even apprehensive about their future; and, on the other, too deeply wedded to some of their own traditions and customs to come out of the rut as quickly as the Hindus had done. They could

¹ *Pioneer*, January 7, 1891.

² Extract from Sir Syed's article, "In Support of Western Education". See Appendix.

not, therefore, take full advantage of the new opportunities which the British provided. Among the Hindus the new English-educated class was of quite a different character. Most of its members came from the lower strata of society; in fact in 1861 not one among the 44 graduates of the Calcutta University belonged to the Hindu gentry.³ As Sir Henry Maine pointed out five years later, "The fact is that the founders of the University of Calcutta thought to create an aristocratic institution; and, in spite of themselves, they have created a popular institution."⁴ This difference in the social and economic status of the two educated classes had a considerable effect on the attitude that the two communities took towards political and social problems.

Naturally, all these trends and developments kept the Hindus and the Muslims apart; instead of removing the differences between the two communities, political and economic developments only aggravated them, leading to the perpetuation of old animosities and frictions. In many cases these assumed modern forms. To make the situation worse, there were the new factors, mainly the outcome of British rule, such as the agro-industrial reforms which benefitted the Hindus far more than the Muslims and hence caused more frustration among the Muslims; the Hindi-Urdu controversy, which roused mutual hatreds and jealousies and frightened the Muslims about their cultural identity; the riots which encouraged communal bitterness; the political gatherings, which made the Muslims feel still more insecure about their future; the Press, which yielded a new power in public life, strengthening the position of the Hindus; and finally the ascendancy of the educated Hindus in practically every sphere, including the administration, which caused an understandable nervousness among the Muslims, who lagged far behind the majority community in every activity.

³ *Calcutta University Calender* (1861-62), 109-12. As Raja Narendra Krishna, in his speech at the Town Hall of Calcutta on July 2, 1870 pointed out: English education was mainly confined to "that intelligent class of natives of Bengal" which was the least able to pay for it. Also see the statement of W. R. Kolhatkara in the *Report by the Central Provinces Provincial Committee of the Education Commission*, 270.

⁴ Quoted by Arthur Hewell in his *Education in British India prior to 1854 and in 1870-71*, 216.

To add to these problems, there were the ordinary British officials who, quite naturally, had their own likes and dislikes. In their day-to-day dealings, some of them preferred the Hindus and others the Muslims. This, too, often resulted in the intensification of old hostilities between the two communities; hence the well-known indictment of "divide and rule" against the British. As Morison has aptly put it, "The fact is generally acknowledged and I do not think the cause is far to seek. We have never aimed at the creation of national sentiment in India and with the best intentions have founded institutions which have a disintegrating tendency."⁵ It was not, however, so much the institutions as their operation which resulted in the lack of such a sentiment of unity.

However, it would be wrong to say that there was any hard and fast policy of "divide and rule", pursued by either the British Cabinet or the various Viceroys; certainly there are more British utterances on record to the contrary than in support of it. To this no less a person than Sir William Wedderburn, an ex-President of the Congress, had borne public testimony,⁶ as also such responsible Indian leaders as Naoroji and Gokhale. The British policy was not "divide and rule"—the division was already there; it was, to use Curzon's classic phrase, "to hold the scales even between the Hindus and Muslims".⁷ Naturally, in doing so, preference was given, sometimes to one community and sometimes to the other, depending on the rulers' requirements and the exigencies of the situation, with the result that communal rivalries and jealousies, instead of being minimised, were still more aggravated. Hence, whatever be the motive, this pragmatic approach by the British to so vital a problem as inter-communal harmony was a poor justification of their "civilising role"; it stands out in sharp contrast to the physical unity that they brought about in the sub-continent. But this unity was mainly for their own administrative purposes; it had little to do with a readjustment of relationships

⁵ Theodore Morison, *Imperial Rule in India*, 7-8. Also see Ram Prasad Chanda's article on "Racial Dissensions in India" in the *Hindustan Review*, March 1904, 270-79.

⁶ See Sir William Wedderburn's letter to the *New York Sun* of August 19, 1900 quoted in *India*, September 7, 1900.

⁷ See editorial comments in the *St. James' Gazette*, December 28, 1901.

between the two communities under their charge. In fact, some of their important officials, such as Colvin and Strachey, encouraged the Muslims to develop an exclusive attitude; others were as keen that the Hindus developed a distinct personality, based on their ancient culture and heritage. As a consequence, old values retained some of their special attractions for both the communities but the Hindus, because of their reformist zeal, did not allow themselves to be carried away by sentimental attachment to the past and were influenced by British liberal ideas.

The Arya Samaj, founded in Bombay in 1875 by Dayananda Saraswati, tried to put a brake on this process of Westernisation by its emphasis on Hindu revivalism but, even so, its attitude towards English education was unequivocal and it did a great deal of useful work by opening many English schools and colleges, which professed to spread ancient Hindu ideas but in practice encouraged contacts with the West, particularly in the humanitarian and technological spheres.⁸ The Muslims, being in a minority, found many of the modern ideas, particularly in the political and social spheres, unsuitable for their purposes and clung to conservatism and old world values. This was evident in their education, their Press, their social reforms, even in their economic approach. Furthermore, the Muslim leaders, because of their own background, tried their best to keep the Muslims away from any kind of collaboration with the Hindus. In this they were motivated not so much by any hatred of the Hindus as by an instinct of protection against the possibility of eventual domination by the majority community. They looked upon the British as arbiters of inter-communal disputes. As outsiders, the British, they believed, had no reason to destroy Muslim religious and cultural identity; but the Hindus, being the major community, having suffered oppression through many generations, were bound—so thought the Muslim leaders—to impose their own supremacy on others. This approach came as a great shock to the liberal Hindu leadership, particularly of the Congress, which had been so anxious for Muslim collaboration in the larger national interest; it tried to woo the

⁸ For more information, see Lajpat Rai's *The Arya Samaj* (London, 1915).

Muslims in various ways but the response was rarely encouraging. The Muslims continued to be suspicious of the Hindus and the Hindus, more particularly because of the presence of the British rulers, were unable to remove the prejudices and apprehensions of the Muslim minority.

In keeping the Muslims apart from the Hindus, Sir Syed played no small a part. True, he had his own reason, which I have explained in earlier chapters; but what made him a determined political opponent of the Hindus was their demand for more participation in administration and in legislative bodies. So long as these demands were not made by the Hindus, Sir Syed even talked of the Muslims being Hindus.⁹ But as soon as there was clamour for Indian participation in deliberative and administrative organs of the Government, Sir Syed became alarmed. He opposed the Congress on every issue, irrespective of its merits, and denounced the whole movement as not only dangerous for the Muslims but also for the rest of India. He was convinced that it posed the biggest threat to Muslim security.¹⁰ That was the reason why he looked upon British rule as a divine dispensation. As Beck said on Sir Syed's death, "He believed, with that intensity of conviction which was one of his most remarkable qualities, that the British Government was directly sent by God to promote the happiness and civilisation of the people of India."¹¹ Despite his respect for the progress and achievements of the new Hindu generation, he was of the opinion, to use Morison's words, "that the best way of reconcil-

⁹ "By the word *nation* I mean both Hindus and Muslims. . . . In my opinion, it matters not whatever be their religious belief, because we cannot see anything of it; but what we see is that all of us, whether Hindus or Muslims, live on one soil, are governed by one and the same ruler, have the same sources of our advantage, and equally share the hardships of a famine. These are the various grounds on which I designate both the communities that inhabit India by the expression Hindu nation."—Sir Syed in reply to the Address from the Indian Association of Lahore on February 3, 1884. See *Syed Ahmed Khan Ka Safarnam-i-Punjab* (Urdu and English texts), 156-170.

¹⁰ A few months before his death, Sir Syed wrote an article on Hindu-Muslim relations, wherein he, again, warned Indians of the inherent dangers of the Congress movement. See Sir Syed, *Akhiri Mazameen* (Urdu text), 55-8.

¹¹ *M.A.O. College Magazine*, April, 1898.

ing the two communities lay in maintaining the autocracy of the British Government intact".¹² For the Muslims, he held, this was particularly essential; without it, they would be submerged in the rising ocean of modern Hinduism. Sir Syed, therefore, emphasised that, if the Muslims remained loyal, they would be secure. He was convinced that the British would stand by them. His lieutenants lacked his confidence but they were not prepared to barter their faith in the British for the proclaimed assurances of the Hindu leaders. Temporarily, this attitude paid some dividends; it made the Muslims popular with many British officials, who were impressed by the former's old-world refinement, charm and culture. Besides, in the conservatism of Muslim leaders the British discovered a good check against the growing Congress movement; certainly at this time it proved invaluable to both Calcutta and London. On its basis, much was explained and much justified by the bureaucracy about its own autocratic behaviour.

From such an ostrich-like attitude, however, the Muslims did not benefit much; indeed they could not. The Muslim leaders were too concerned about the present to look at the future clearly. Because of their own background, they were unable to foresee the likely popular political outcome of the various British measures, however grudgingly introduced. They never realised that far from perpetuating the old order, Britain, as the "unconscious tool of history", was "causing a social revolution in Hindustan".¹³ Consequently, we find that, on every crucial occasion, the "beneficiaries" were ultimately "let down" by their "trustees". The new forces were too inexorable to be checked for long. History had to take its own course and time and tide could not wait to suit Muslim convenience. This has been very forcefully brought out by John Buchan in his *Memoir of Lord Minto*, in which he points out how the Governor-General, despite his pledge to the Muslim deputation, was keen "to prevent the followers of Islam from becoming a rigid enclave, divorced from the rest of Indian life". In fact, during the discussion on the Indian Councils' Bill in Parliament, Lord Morley even suggested as the best solution of the Hindu-Muslim

¹² Quoted by *India*, January 11, 1901.

¹³ Karl Marx, *Letters on India* (edited by B.P.L. and Freda Bedi), 9.

problem "mixed electoral colleges based on proportional representation". But because of the opposition from the Aga Khan and Syed Ameer Ali, the suggestion was dropped and, instead, a diluted scheme of restricted communal representation was granted. Morley became so weary of the spokesmen of Indian Muslims that he told Minto, "We have to take care that in picking up the Musalman we don't drop our Hindu parcels."¹⁴ The result of this approach on the part of the Muslims was that, in the final analysis, they lost much more than they had gained; for instance they demanded the abolition of competitive examinations; the Royal Commission recommended their continuance. They asked for the retention of the Statutory Services; the Royal Commission strongly urged their abolition. They pleaded against popular representation in local boards and municipalities; the British Government sanctioned their introduction. They prayed for official support for Urdu; the British Government gave an impetus to Hindi. They petitioned Parliament against the establishment of any kind of parliamentary institutions in India; the Councils Act of 1892 encouraged the emergence of such institutions. They prayed for the continuance of the partition of Bengal and the retention of Fuller as the Lt.-Governor; the British Government reunited the presidency and recalled Fuller in response to the Hindu protest. Lastly, they asked for separate electorates; these were not only opposed by several Provincial Governments in India¹⁵ but also by many members of Parliament, including Morley,

¹⁴ John Buchan, *Memoir of Lord Minto*.

¹⁵ See *Parliamentary Papers*, Col. 4436: "Replies of the Local Governments, and C". For instance the Punjab Government said that the "work of compilation of electoral lists and the publicity attending Muhammadan elections would unnecessarily emphasise their privileged position" (See *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Part II, Enclosure No. XXI); while according to the Government of Eastern Bengal "it is due to the apathy of the Muhammadan voter that he has not secured representation in proportion to his numbers, and it would seem better to advise him to show more activity in exercising the powers that he possesses than to protect him by such a measure as is under consideration" (See *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Part II, Enclosure No. XXIII). The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces was no less critical. "I do not think it advisable", he wrote, "to create constituencies made of artificial electorates with no common tie but that of creed or occupation" (See *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Part II, Enclosure No. XXIV).

despite his assurances to the contrary.¹⁶ In the end, the Muslims were, no doubt, given separate electorates but their seats were much fewer than they had demanded. In fact, the Congress leaders wanted to give them more, with reservation of seats for the Muslims under joint electorates—an arrangement which would have provided enough safeguards for the Muslims and, at the same time, helped them to become an integral part of the new emerging national structure. However, the Muslim leaders failed to realise that, with all their protestation of loyalty to the British, their community could not, under the operation of even limited democracy, get as a minority the constitutional status of a majority.

Until the end of this period, however, they continued to pin their faith on the British, despite the fact that they had already become disillusioned. Experience did not make them any wiser. One of the Muslim leaders of Eastern Bengal, Syed Nawab Ali Chowdry of Dacca, bemoaned in a letter to Mohsinul Mulk: "If only the Muhammadans of Bengal, instead of following the Government, had agitated like the Hindus and had enlisted the sympathies of the Muhammadans of the whole of India, and raised their voice up to the Parliament, they would never have seen these unfortunate consequences."¹⁷ Quoting at length from this letter, Mohsinul Mulk told Mr. Archbold:

This is only a brief quotation of what I am getting from the whole of India. These people generally say that the policy of Sir Syed and that of mine has done no good to Muhammadans. They say that Government has proved by its actions

¹⁶ Several Liberal MPs opposed the creation of any kind of "separate electorates" for the Muslims, Dr. Rutherford characterising it as "a vicious principle". (See *Hansard, Debates on Indian Affairs*, Session, 1908. 18). In fact, as late as December 17, 1908 Buchanan, the Under Secretary of State for India, assured Parliament, on behalf of Lord Morley, that "... we have made suggestions to the Government of India to the effect that it might be possible to devise a system of electoral colleges by which, in the more advanced provinces, the Muhammadans, landholders and other special communities might obtain their representation on the Councils in proportion to their numbers and importance without the creation of special electorates." (Ibid., 1027).

¹⁷ Letter dated, Bombay, August 18, 1906, from Mohsinul Mulk to W. A. J. Archbold. Quoted by Syed Razi Wasti in his *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905 to 1910* (Oxford 1964), 231-32.

that without agitation there is no hope for any community, and that if we can do nothing for them we must not hope to get any help for the College; in short, the Muhammadans generally will desert us, because the policy of the College is detrimental to their interests. My dear Archbold, nobody can say that the present state of Muhammadan feeling is without its justification. The Liberal Government is at the bottom of it, and is responsible for it. I consider it a wrong policy arising out of the ignorance of the real conditions in India. Mr. John Morley is a philosopher and might well have been contented to give lessons in philosophy; and one cannot but feel sorry that the destiny of India has been placed in his hands. His policy has done a lot of injury to India and may do much more. Is it right for the Government to allow an important section of the Indian population, which has always supported and even depended on Government to safeguard its interests, to be disappointed and get up a spirit of agitation like the Hindus? I only hope that the Government of India will do something to subside the growing Muhammadan feeling and remedy their hopelessness.¹⁸

In the postscript to this letter, Mohsinul Mulk hinted at the idea of a Muslim deputation to Lord Minto: "I have informed Sir James La Touche of the proposal to send a memorial and deputation to the Viceroy because I thought it was necessary."¹⁹ In recommending the request of Mohsinul Mulk for a favourable compliance, Mr. Archbold wrote to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Mr. Dunlop Smith:

If the Muhammadans were informed (privately) that a deputation would be received and a statement made, what would happen would be that representatives of Mohammedans from various parts of India would come to Simla and present a carefully drawn-up petition. The number would not be very large, as the people who ought to be on it are very well known. From my knowledge of those who would lead, I am sure that nothing in the slightest degree disloyal or objectionable would be brought forward. There is no wish on the part

¹⁸ Ibid., 232.

¹⁹ Ibid., 233.

of the Muhammadans to give trouble to the Government in any way, only, if I may judge, a certain widespread nervousness and uneasiness as to the future, a fear lest they should be left out in the cold.²⁰

After this assurance from Mr. Archbold, Mr. Smith wrote to Mohsinul Mulk, informing him that "His Excellency will have much pleasure in receiving the Deputation."²¹ Hence, far from being a "command performance",²² the deputation was the last desperate effort of Mohsinul Mulk and his friends to retrieve their position in their own community and to win over the British to their side.

True, the British never meant to "let down" the Muslims; in fact they often sympathised with them. But they could not behave like absolute despots, all the while crushing opposition,

²⁰ Letter dated, Simla, August 9, 1906 from W. A. J. Archbold to Dunlop Smith (quoted Ibid., 228-29).

²¹ Letter dated, Simla, September 13, 1906 from Dunlop Smith to Mohsinul Mulk (quoted Ibid., 233).

²² An expression used by Maulana Mohamed Ali in his Presidential Address to the Congress in 1924. The following is the relevant extract:

Some months previously a Muslim Deputation had waited at Simla on the Viceroy, Lord Minto, to place before him and his Government a statement of the Muslim demands in connection with the Minto-Morley reforms then foreshadowed. To follow the fashion of British journalists during the War, 'there is no harm now in saying' that the Deputation's was a 'command performance'. It was clear that Government could no longer resist the demands of educated Indians and, as usual, it was about to dole out to them a morsel that would keep them gagged for some years. Hitherto the Muslims had acted very much like the Irish prisoner in the dock, who, in reply to the Judge's inquiry whether he had any counsel to represent him in the trial, had frankly replied that he had certainly not engaged counsel, but, that he had 'friends in the jury'. But now the Muslims' 'friends in the jury' had themselves privately urged that the accused should engage duly qualified counsel like others. From whatever source the inspiration may have come, there is no doubt that the Muslim cause was this time properly advocated. In the common territorial electorates the Muslims had certainly not succeeded in securing anything like adequate or real representation, and those who denounced and deplored the creation of separate electorates for which the Muslims had pleaded should have remembered that separate electorates were the consequence, and not the cause of the separation between Muslims and their more numerous Hindu brethren.

ignoring the popular urges, and only relying, for maintenance of their Raj, on the minorities; they had to compromise, at times, even in spite of themselves, with the new forces, which were no less their own creation. Their advent had produced certain conditions of which they were as much victims as their Muslim subjects. Their administration was typically British; it could not, therefore, but have a parliamentary touch about it, however unreal. They introduced industrialisation; this was bound to disturb the old economic order. They encouraged banking and new commercial enterprises; the better-trained persons—those trained on more modern lines—could alone benefit from these measures. Finally, the British taught the Indians English; this gave Indians a new conception of administration—which had to be British in more sense than one. In fact, within less than a decade, Minto's successor, Lord Hardinge, had publicly to admit: "I do not for a moment wish to discountenance self-government for India as a national ideal."²³ This was exactly what Dadabhai Naoroji had demanded in his Presidential Address to the twenty-second session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in 1905: "We do not ask any favours. We want only justice . . . the whole matter can be compromised in the word, self-government or *Swaraj*, like that of the United Kingdom or the colonies."

Being the overwhelming majority of the population, all these changes could not but prove more beneficial to the Hindus rather than to the Muslims, who, as we have seen, remained miles behind the Hindus in every field. True, whenever the Conservatives came to power in London the pace of events somewhat slowed down; but under the Liberals the Congress movement gathered more and more British support, if not administratively, in any event morally and politically.

However, instead of facing these realities, the Muslim leaders did little save crying for safeguards; and, conscious of the peculiar characteristics of India, the British conceded many. These safeguards served their purpose so long as the British were in India; but what was to happen if and when the British left?

²³ See Lord Hardinge's farewell address in the Proceedings of the Governor-General's Legislative Council, 1915-16 Session.

It is to this aspect that the Muslim leaders of this period rarely gave a thought; if they had the vision and foresight to see the future in its proper perspective, the subsequent developments, which culminated in the partition of India, would not have taken the tragic turn they did. But could they have succeeded in tearing themselves away from the past with all its prejudices and inhibitions? Furthermore, could mutual trust in each other's *bona fides* have suddenly come about, especially when fears on one side and suspicions on the other prevailed and one paid only lip service to unity and the other opposed it? Likewise, while religious prejudices, social barriers, and cultural exclusiveness were sometimes decried by both Hindu and Muslim leaders, did they do anything worthwhile to remove them? Facts tell a dismal story of failure, with the result that religious loyalties became more intense as the prospects of popular participation in administration brightened. Had greater and more sustained efforts been made to unite the two communities on more rational and less emotional lines, the shape of things to come would perhaps have been better. But these are some of those "ifs" and "buts" with which the history of the world is replete!

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

“RETURN showing the Number of APPOINTMENTS in India, of not less than 150 Rupees a Month in Value, filled up during the Years 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870 and 1871 by the appointment of NATIVES of India, distinguishing those held by Hindus from those held by Muhammadans.”

GEORGE HAMILTON
Under Secretary of State for India

India Office, 17 February 1875

	1867		1868		1869		1870		1871	
	Hindus	Muham- madans	Hindus	Muham- madans	Hindus	Muham- madans	Hindus	Muham- madans	Hindus	Muham- madans
Bengal	137	16	129	13	193	17	117	15	88	11
Bombay	50	8	63	2	120	7	53	6	51	5
Sind	9	3	4	1	9	5	5	2	3	1
	1*			2*						
Madras	67	4	62	3	80	5	69	2	70	1
North Western Provinces	33	21	31	20	26	16	21	22	30	16
Punjab	27	24	50	32	53	37	43	28	51	31
British Burma	—	—	2	1	—	—	1	—	—	1
	4†		3†				4†			

Oudh	11	6	13	13	8	7	5	5	6	5
Central Provinces	18	12	10	1	3	4	2	3	4	2
Coorg	Nil									
Ajmere	1	—	5	1	2	1	—	—	2	—
Mysore	16	—	30	7	21	5	25	3	10	4
Hyderabad	14	3	7	1	6	2	3	4	5	2
Port Blair	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
	1†									
Political Agencies under	2*	2	1	1	1*	2	1*	—	—	—
Foreign Department										
Foreign Department	Nil									
Military Department	15	—	10	1	15	3	9	1	15	1
Home Department	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—	1	—
Finance Department	1	—	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—
Revenue Department	1	1	—	2	—	3	1	4	3	—
						1†				
Public Works Department	4	—	5	—	6	—	10	—	7	—
Legislative Department	Nil									
Director General of Post Office	5	1	10	—	4	—	4	—	1	—
			2*		1*					
<hr/>										
	418	101	438	101	555	115	376	94	348	80

Parsis are included under Hindus. * Parsis. † Burmese. ‡ Burmese, Buddhist.

APPENDIX B

Rules of the United Indian Patriotic Association with the Letters from Patrons and the List of Affiliated Muhammadan Associations

RULES

I. This Association shall be called "The United Indian Patriotic Association".

II. Its objects shall be:

(a) To publish and circulate pamphlets and other papers for information of Members of Parliament, English journals, and the people of Great Britain, in which those misstatements will be pointed out by which the supporters of the Indian National Congress have wrongfully attempted to convince the English people that all the nations of India and the Indian Chiefs and Rulers agree with the aims and objects of the National Congress.

(b) To inform Members of Parliament and the newspapers of Great Britain and its people by the same means of the opinions of Muhammadans in general, of the Islamia Anjumans, and of those Hindus and their societies which are opposed to the objects of the National Congress.

(c) To strive to preserve peace in India, and to strengthen the British Rule, and to remove those bad feelings from the hearts of the Indian people which the supporters of the Congress are stirring up throughout the country, and by which great dissatisfaction is being raised among the people against the British Government.

III. Indian Chiefs and Rulers who sympathise with the objects of the Association will be requested to become Patrons of the Association.

IV. Subject to Rule V, any person, of whatever race or creed, agreeing with the objects of the Association, may become a member of the Association on payment, in advance, of an annual subscription of from Rs. 12 to Rs. 60, according to the wish of the subscriber.

V. No person who is a paid Government servant can become a member of the Association.

VI. Donations will be accepted from members and others anxious to help the work of the Association. The names of donors who are not members will be published in a separate list.

VII. The names of Islamia Anjumans and Hindu Societies which may have expressed their sympathy with the objects of the Association will be published in a separate list.

VIII. The list containing the names of members, donors and Anjumans sympathising with the Association will be sent with every pamphlet to England for circulation.

IX. Members who have subscribed at the rate of Rs. 60 per annum will be supplied, free of cost, with copies of all pamphlets which may be printed by the Association for circulation in England. Other persons may purchase such pamphlets.

X. An Annual Report of the work of the Association, including an account of income and expenditure, will be sent, free of cost, to all members and the above-mentioned Societies.

XI. A European gentleman will be appointed as an Editor to assist in the preparation and publication of pamphlets.

XII. The contents of the pamphlets published shall be as follows:

- (a) Articles and news selected from Indian papers sympathising with the Association and translations from Vernacular papers.
- (b) The resolutions and opinions of meetings of Muhammadans and Hindus which may have expressed sympathy with the objects of the Association.

- (c) Articles, lectures, and essays by members and non-members in support of the objects of the Association. The names of the writers will be published, except in cases when the writer does not wish his name to be published and the gentleman in charge of the preparation of pamphlets agree its anonymous publication.

XIII. Some members of the Association will be selected, who, in conjunction with the Editor, will select and sanction the publication of pamphlets &c.

XIV. All communications should be addressed to the Hon'ble Sir Syed Ahmed, Khan Bahadur, K.C.S.I., at Aligarh, who will act as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer till further arrangements have been made.

(sd) SYED AHMED
Honorary Secretary

(B) LETTERS FROM PATRONS

(1) *His Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad (Deccan)*

Letter of His Highness the Nizam's Prime Minister, Sir Asman Jah, to the Secretary of the Association dated 29th September, 1888.

My Dear Sir Syed Ahmed,

On behalf of His Highness and by his command I have much pleasure in enclosing a cheque for Rs. 4,000 towards the United Indian Patriotic Association which you and other well-wishers of the country have founded. I am to add that the aims and objects of the Association have His Highness's fullest sympathy.

I remain,
My dear Sir Syed Ahmed
Yours sincerely,

(sd) Asman Jah.

(2) *His Excellency Nawab Sir Salar Jung, K.C.I.E.*

His Excellency Nawab Sir Salar Jung, K.C.I.E.'s letter to the Secretary of the Association, dated 2nd September, 1888.

My Dear Sir Syed Ahmed,

I have to acknowledge with thanks your letter setting forth the nature and aims of the United Indian Patriotic Association. I feel highly gratified at being elected a patron of the Association, and I take this oppor-

tunity of expressing my cordial approval of the energetic and timely steps which you have taken to counteract the mischievous teachings of the body which has arrogated to itself the title of the Indian National Congress. That the Congress in question is a truly national or representative association, no one acquainted with the elements composing it, or the objects which it has set before itself, can for a moment believe. Indeed, a representative body is in the present day, at any rate, utterly inconceivable, when one considers the heterogeneous population of India, with its diversities of creed, custom, character, and traditional sympathies and antipathies. Whether it will become a possibility in the future we need not here stop to inquire. What we have to deal with is the present, and in the present what do we find? A Government, which—whatever may be its shortcomings—is beyond doubt not only far superior to any that the land has ever had under former rulers, but which is decidedly superior to most of those now existing in what are universally admitted to be the advanced countries of the West. For, in which of the countries of Europe does the subject enjoy greater liberty of speech and action; in how many is he more lightly taxed, and where are his rights better protected by law, or greater toleration manifested towards his religion and social usages than in India? The agitators forget that the Government of India, as at present constituted, is no crude and novel experiment in administration, but is the outcome of historical circumstances and years of earnest, philanthropic and thoughtful elaboration, while the long interval of peace, which the country has enjoyed under a just and impartial rule, has afforded opportunities for the development of a condition of prosperity which, we may be sure, is fully appreciated by the immense majority of the people.

We have it on high authority that the evils which men do live after them, and it is a matter of sincere regret that this unfortunate agitation should have gone the length it has done, for even should the movement, which, as you know, is not quite spontaneous, die out, the pamphlets, catechisms, and tracts, now being sown broadcast by the emissaries of the Congress are not likely to be wholly without effect, and the least of the evils to be appreciated from this misguided and misleading propagandism is the fostering of a spirit of discontent and restlessness amongst the masses which may hereafter give serious trouble to the Government.

It is gratifying, however, to find that numbers of Muhammadans of high culture and social position have refused to countenance the Congress from the first, while others, who had joined it without full consideration, withdrew after a closer scrutiny had revealed to them the true character and tendency of the movement to which they had given their adhesion. The power of the Government of India, and, in particular, its ability to act with promptitude and energy in times of emergency, depend entirely upon the centralisation of authority. Those Muhammadans who have studied the history of the Musalman dynasties that formerly held sway in India, are fully cognisant of this fact, and to them, as well as to numbers of their enlightened Hindu brethren, the demands and pretensions of the Congress must appear dangerous and impractic-

able. For the nature of the Indians, and for that matter of most Oriental people, is averse to sudden and violent change of any kind. What they have been accustomed to, what they have contentedly lived under for years, to that they will adhere persistently. They have a settled, and to some extent a natural and wholesome, repugnance to the unsuitable, the unknown, and the untried. If political experiments are looked upon with suspicion in Europe, they are infinitely more unpopular here. Exotic notions regarding the parliamentary form of government are not likely to take root in India until our circumstances and conditions approach more nearly to those existing in England, and this is not to be expected for many years to come. The great majority of the people of this country know nothing of the theories of representative institutions which appear to be the stock-in-trade of the Congress. Wishing you every success in the useful and patriotic movement which you have initiated, and in promoting which I feel confident that you will have the assistance and the best sympathies of all who understand the real interest and necessities of India, whatever be their creed or nationality.

I remain, with kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(sd) Salar Jung

LIST OF AFFILIATED MUHAMMADAN ASSOCIATIONS

1. Anjuman Islamia, Lahore, Punjab
2. Anjuman Islamia Hagani, Ludhiana, Punjab
3. The Central National Muhammadan Association Head Quarters, Calcutta
4. Anjuman Islamia, Amritsar, Punjab
5. Anjuman Himayat Islam, Amritsar, Punjab
6. Anjuman Islamia, Barcilly, North-Western Provinces
7. The National Muhammadan Association, Bhagalpur, Bengal
8. Anjuman Islamia, Chapra, Zila Sarun, Bengal
9. Anjuman Ilmi, Budaon, North-Western Provinces
10. Anjuman Islamia, Budaon, North-Western Provinces
11. The Jubilee Muhammadan Association, Budaon, North-Western Provinces
12. Anjuman Islamia, Bankipur, Bengal
13. Majlis Islamia, Ludhiana, Punjab
14. Anjuman Islamia, Dindigul, Madras
15. Branch National Muhammadan Association, Midnapur, Bengal
16. Majlis Islamia, Meerut, North-Western Provinces
17. Anjuman Islamia, Mymensing, Eastern Bengal
18. National Muhammadan Association Branch, Shaikhpura
19. Anjuman Islamia, Gujrat, Punjab
20. Anjuman Islamia, Jhaijhar, District Rohtak, Punjab

21. Muhammadan Anjuman Mufid-i-Am, Qasur, Punjab
22. Anjuman Islamia, Jubbulpore, Central Provinces
23. Anjuman Islamia, Wazirabad, Punjab
24. Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore, Punjab
25. Anjuman Hamdardi, Amritsar, Punjab
26. Anjuman Muinul Islam, Ajmere, Rajputana
27. Majlis-i-Islam, Bangalore, and Majlis-i-Islam, Hasan, Mysore
28. Anjuman Islamia, Cawnpore, North-Western Provinces
29. Anjuman-I-Babussalam, Piryaman, Partabgarh, Oudh
30. National Muhammadan Association, Branch Ellore, Madras
31. Anjuman Darussalam, Lucknow, Oudh
32. Anjuman Islamia, Mooltan, Punjab
33. Anjuman Islamia, Umballa, Punjab
34. Anjuman Islamia, Jullundur, Punjab
35. Anjuman-i-Mufidul Islam, Jingapara, Mohanganj, Mymensing, Bengal
36. National Muhammadan Association, Branch Pubna, Bengal
37. Anjuman Islamia, Ajmere, Rajputana
38. Muhammadan Central National Association, Punjab, Lahore
39. Bilgram Institute, Bilgram, Hardoi, Oudh
40. Anjuman-i-Islamia, Rangpur, Bengal
41. Anjuman-i-Tahzib-i-Islam, Arrah, Bengal
42. Anjuman-i-Ahbab, Bombay
43. Anjuman Islamia, Peshawar, Punjab
44. Anjuman Islamia, Lucknow, Oudh
45. Anjuman-i-Movey-i-dul Islam, Saharanpur, North-Western Provinces
46. Sind Branch, Central National Muhammadan Association, Karachi, Sind
47. Anjuman Hami-i-Islam, Nagpur, Central Provinces
48. Hugli District National Muhammadan Association, Bengal
49. Anjuman Ummeiya Islamia, Dinapore, Bengal
50. Anjuman Islamia, Gurdaspur, Punjab
51. Anjuman Islamia, Vizagapatam, Madras
52. Anjuman Islamia, Roorkee, North-Western Provinces
53. Anjuman Nasir-ul-Islam, Nagpur, Central Provinces



In Support of Western Education

by SYED AHMED KHAN

ABOUT thirty years have now elapsed since the despatch of 1854. During this period the condition of India has undergone a considerable change. In 1854, when the despatch was written, India was certainly in a condition which might justify our thinking that the acquisition of knowledge through the medium of the vernaculars of the country would be enough to meet our immediate wants. But now such is not the case. Vernacular education is no more regarded as sufficient for our daily affairs of life. It is only of use to us in our private and domestic affairs, and no higher degree of proficiency than what is acquired in primary and middle vernacular schools is requisite for that purpose; nor is more wanted by the country. It is English education which is urgently needed by the country, and by the people in their daily life. We see that an ordinary shopkeeper who is neither himself acquainted with English, nor has any English-knowing person in his employment, feels it a serious hindrance in the progress of his business. Even the itinerant pedlars and boxwalas, who go from door to door selling their articles, keenly feel the necessity of knowing at least the English names of their commodities, and of being able to tell their

prices in English. It is high time that Government as well as the people should exert themselves to their utmost in extending this popular education, if I may be allowed so to call it.

In vernacular and English primary and middle schools, the object of which is to impart instruction up to that standard only, and not to prepare scholars for a higher standard of education, the interests of the country will no doubt be furthered by teaching the Western sciences to the standard laid down for those institutions in vernacular. But in English elementary schools, which have been established with the object of serving as a stepping-stone for higher education, the tuition of European sciences through the medium of the vernacular is calculated to ruin the cause of education.

I confess I am the person who had first entertained the idea that the acquisition of the knowledge of European sciences through the medium of the vernacular would be more beneficial to the country. I am the person who had found fault with Lord Macaulay's Minute of 1835 for exposing the defects of oriental learning, and recommending the study of Western science and literature, and had failed to consider whether the introduction of European sciences by means of the vernaculars would bring any advantage to the native community.

I did not confine my opinion to theory alone, but tried to put it into practice. I discussed the matter at various meetings, wrote several pamphlets and articles on the subject, and sent memorials to local and supreme Governments. A Society, known by the name of 'The Scientific Society, Allygurh', was established for the very purpose, and it translated several scientific and historical works from the English language into the vernacular. But I could not help acknowledging the fallacy of my opinion at last. I was forced to accept the truth of what an eminent liberal statesman has said, that "what the Indian of our day wanted, whether he was Hindu or Mohammedan, was some insight into the literature and science which were the life of his own time, and of the vigorous race which were the representative of all knowledge and all power to him." I felt the soundness and sincerity of the policy adopted by Lord William Bentinck when he declared that "the great object of the Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the Natives of India".

I am personally of opinion that the duty of Government, in relation to public instruction, is not to provide education to the people, but to aid the people in procuring it for themselves. But the public feeling seems to differ widely from this view. The people base their argument on the fact that in India all matters affecting the public weal have always rested with Government. They see no reason why the education of the people, which is also a matter of public weal, should not rest with Government. After a full consideration of the question in all its bearings, I have come to the conclusion that the native public cannot obtain suitable education unless the people take the entire management of their education into their own hands, and that it is not possible for Government to adopt a system of education which may answer all purposes and satisfy the special wants of the various sections of the population. It would therefore be more bene-

ficial to the country if Government should leave the entire management of their education to the people, and withdraw its own interference. The public opinion is not in favour of this view. A very able and intelligent native gentleman said to me some time ago that the idea that we should ourselves procure our education was an entire mistake; that use of the word 'ourselves' in any national sense, with reference to the people of India, was out of place, for no nation could undertake any great work without the co-operation of all classes, high and low, whether in point of wealth or political and administrative power. He added that the higher order of political and administrative power in India was held by Government and its European officers, and that those who benefited most by commerce in India were also Europeans; and therefore they formed in reality the most important section of the Indian population.

Apropos of this, I may be allowed to relate an incident which has happened to myself. At the time when the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College was established at Allypore, I asked a European gentleman, holding a high office under Government, to grant some pecuniary aid to the institution. He replied that he was not bound to help us in the matter, that the institution was a child of ours and not his, and that he would rather be inclined to spurn it than to hug it with paternal affection.

It may be briefly stated that the causes which have kept the Mohammedans aloof from English education may be traced to four sources—to their political traditions, social customs, religious beliefs, and poverty. An insight into the political causes can be obtained by studying the history of the last two centuries. The Mohammedan public was not opposed to the establishment of British rule in India, nor did the advent of British rule cause any political discontent among that people. In those days of anarchy and oppression, when the country was in want of paramount power, the establishment of British supremacy was cordially welcomed by the whole native community; and the Mohammedans also viewed this political change with feelings of satisfaction. But the subordinate political change which this transition naturally involved as a consequence, and which proved a great and unexpected blow to the condition of the Mohammedans, engendered in them a feeling of aversion against the British, and against all things relating to the British nation. For the same reason they conceived an aversion for the English language and for the sciences that were presented to them through the medium of that language. But this aversion is now declining in the same degree in which education is spreading among Mohammedans.

The Mohammedans were proud of their socio-political position, and their keeping aloof from English education may in some measure be ascribed to the fact that the Government colleges and schools including among their pupils some of those whom the Mohammedans, with an undue pride and unreasonable self-conceit and vanity, regarded with social contempt. They could never be brought to admit that sound and useful learning existed in any language except Arabic and Persian. They had given a peculiar form to moral philosophy, and had based it on religious principles, which they believed to be infallible; and this circumstance had dispensed, as they

thought, with the necessity of European science and literature. I still remember the days when, in respectable families, the study of English, with the object of obtaining a post in Government service or securing any other lucrative employment, was considered highly discreditable. The prejudice has now, however, much slackened.

The religious aspect of the question I have already described. The poverty of the Mohammedan community is only too obvious to require any comment. I am, however, of opinion that the above-mentioned socio-political causes, though still extant, have been mitigated to a considerable extent, and the Mohammedans are gradually freeing themselves of old prejudices and taking to the study of English literature and science.

**The Muslim Petition to the House
of Commons on the Constitutional
Proposals of the Indian National
Congress with a Statement about
the Signatures to the Petition**

(A) The Petition

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled. The humble Petition of the undersigned Indian Mahomedans:

Sheweth,—That your petitioners pray that your Honourable House will not introduce the principle of election into the constitution of the Indian Councils, as requested by the Indian National Congress.

That your petitioners believe that the effect of introducing this principle would be to destroy that evenhanded justice which has been hitherto the basis of British Rule and would place them and other minorities in an almost intolerable subjection to classes actively hostile to their welfare.

Your petitioners beg to lay before you the following facts:

1. That the Indian Mahomedans, although only one-fifth of the inhabitants of India, are the largest single community and number not less than

50,000,000 souls: and that therefore the welfare of so large a number of Her Majesty's subjects cannot be an object of indifference to your Honourable House.

2. That through its history, traditions, bravery and intelligence the Indian Mahomedan nation is a factor of great importance in Indian politics.

3. That inasmuch as the Indian Mahomedans are not confined, like the nationalities of Europe, to any special locality, but are dispersed throughout India among the multitude of other races and castes inhabiting the Continent, they are in most parts of India in a considerable minority; and that therefore in any system of election they must of necessity be outvoted. Overwhelming proof of this is furnished by the existing municipalities. It may be safely said that in the event of a popular agitation appealing to the religious sentiments of the people, such for example as the agitation now afloat to prohibit cow-killing, a measure that would deprive the poorer Mahomedans of one of their most important articles of food, scarcely a single Mahomedan member representing Mahomedan sentiment could be returned.

4. That the demand for the introduction of an elective system into the Government of India proceeds from the class of English-educated Hindus, a class that is exceptionally well able to make its voice heard both in England and in India; while the Mahomedans, being very backward in English education, have been unable to give equal prominence to their views. And therefore, that your Honourable House should not be led into supposing by the amount of noise and stir produced by the National Congress party that the quantity and quality of native opinion opposed to it is insignificant or uninfluential.

5. That any system of proportionate representation would in no way protect Mahomedan interests, inasmuch as the Hindus of various races would be in a majority of four to one, and as all matters in the Council would be decided by a simple majority, the Mahomedan members would always be inevitably outvoted.

That your petitioners pray that your Honourable House will retain the principle of nomination by Government of all members of the Indian Councils, by which alone their interests and the interests of other minorities can be protected.

That your petitioners confidently rely on receiving from your Honourable House a full and complete consideration of their case.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

(B) The Statement about the Signatures to the Petition issued by the Secretary of the United Indian Patriotic Association

The places from which signatures have been obtained are given below, together with the number of signatures received from each place. When signatures have been received from two or more towns or villages in one district they will be grouped under the chief town of the district, consequently the names must be understood to refer to districts rather than towns.

Delhi (Punjab)	4,183	Kasur (Punjab)	170
Shahjehanpur (N.W.P.)	3,193	Kurnal (Punjab)	169
Aligarh (N.W.P.)	2,817	Rangpore (Bengal)	164
Lahore (Punjab)	2,223	Karachi (Sind)	148
Allahabad (N.W.P.)	1,959	Monghyr (Bengal)	144
Moradabad (N.W.P.)	1,745	Jessore (Bengal)	142
Batala (Punjab)	1,613	Sherkot (Sind)	131
Lucknow (Oudh)	1,521	Pandua (Bengal)	127
Agra (N.W.P.)	1,503	Bhopal (Rajputana)	125
Cawnpore (N.W.P.)	1,304	Sewan (Bengal)	125
Eta (N.W.P.)	1,181	Mainpuri (N.W.P.)	125
Fatehgarh (N.W.P.)	1,125	Shikarpur (Sind)	124
Ghazipur (N.W.P.)	1,112	Mandawar (Mysore)	114
Ferozpur (Punjab)	1,080	Maisinghpur (?)	91
Gujrat (Punjab)	914	Mozaffargarh (Punjab)	90
Muzaffernagar (N.W.P.)	907	Dinapore (Bengal)	86
Ajmere (Rajputana)	784	Indore (Rajputana)	83
Muttra (N.W.P.)	771	Sukkur (Sind)	81
Jaunpur (N.W.P.)	752	Tumkur (Madras)	80
Bijnor (N.W.P.)	717	Rohtak (Punjab)	67
Mymensingh (Bengal)	693	Bilgram (Oudh)	67
Calcutta (Bengal)	577	Dindigul (Madras)	63
Patna (Bengal)	445	Baghwanpura (Punjab)	63
Meerut (N.W.P.)	314	Fatehpur (N.W.P.)	59
Sandhila (Oudh)	309	Chapra (Bengal)	55
Rewari (Punjab)	308	Barabanki (Oudh)	54
Azamgarh (N.W.P.)	281	Dumkal	48
Hyderabad (Sind)	230	Hughli (Bengal)	41
Nagpur (Central Provinces)	226	Unao (Oudh)	39
Bulandshahr (N.W.P.)	226	Bareilly (N.W.P.)	38
Budaon (N.W.P.)	217	Partabgarh (Oudh)	26
Jullundur (Punjab)	195	Jubbulpore (Central Provinces)	22
Hoshiarpur (Punjab)	192	Surat (Bombay)	19
Umballa (Punjab)	187	Muzufferpur (Bengal)	13
Durbhunga (Bengal)	173	Midnapur (Bengal)	157
Panipat (Punjab)	172		
Total 29,299			

The above signatures include many men of influence and weight in the Mahomedan community. An analysis of 4,568 signatures show the following result as regards the professions and occupations of the signatories:—

Zemindars	1,068	Medical Men	75
Trade	643	Priests	69
Service	637	Teachers	65
Shopkeepers	563	Legal Profession	48
Students	281	Govt. Pensioners	35
Workmen	151	Miscellaneous	316
Cultivators	113	Unspecified	505

APPENDIX E

Rules of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India

1. This Association shall be called the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India.
2. Its objects shall be—
 - (1) To protect the political interests of Mahomedans by representing their views before the English people and the Indian Government.
 - (2) To discourage popular political agitation among Mahomedans.
 - (3) To lend support to measures calculated to increase the stability of the British Government and the security of the Empire; to strive to preserve peace in India; and to encourage sentiments of loyalty in the population.
3. Subject to Rule 4, all persons sympathising with the objects of the Association may become members on payment of an annual subscription of Rs. 3.

4. No person who is a paid Government servant, or who is in *statu pupillari*, shall be admitted to membership of the Association.
5. The policy of the Association shall be directed by a Council, which shall have entire charge of its business.
6. The Council shall consist, to begin with, of the following gentlemen—

Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali Khan	Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Bahadur
Khwaja Yusuf Shah	The Hon'ble Ismail Khan
Niaz Mahomed Khan	Nawab Mohsinul Mulk
M. Shahdin, Barrister-at-law	Theodore Beck
Abdur Rahman Khan, Barrister-at-law	Syed Mahmud
Abdul Hakim Khan, Barrister-at-law	Mahomed Mir
7. Other members of the Association may be added to the Council by the members of the Council, one contrary vote in ten to prevent the election of any person. When the name of a person is proposed for election to the Council his name shall be sent by post to every member of the Council, and the decision shall be according to the votes received in writing.
8. If the number of the persons in the Council should exceed 24, not more than three persons shall be elected to the Council in one year.
9. Members of the Council shall pay an annual subscription of Rs. 5.
10. Meetings of the Council shall be called from time to time by the Honorary Secretary of the Association in such places as he shall consider most convenient: Provided that the Honorary Secretary shall, at the request of not less than half the members of the Council for the time being, call a Meeting of the Council in such place or on such date as the members may direct.
11. In the event of the Council issuing any memorial or manifesto, a copy of the proposed memorial or manifesto shall be previously circulated to all members of the Council, who may record their opinions on the same. The decisions of the Council shall be by the majority of the votes received.
12. The Officers of the Association shall be chosen by the Council.
13. Copies of memorials, manifestoes, and other publications of the Association shall be sent to all members of the Association.
14. Donations will be accepted from members and others anxious to help the work of the Association.
15. No change shall be made in these Rules except by a two-thirds majority of the Council, the votes being given in person or writing.
16. Consistently with the above Rules the Council may make Bye-laws to carry out the purpose of the Association.

Address of the Muhammadan Deputation with Names of its Members and Lord Minto's reply thereto

ADDRESS OF THE MUHAMMADAN DEPUTATION

May it please Your Excellency,—Availing ourselves of the permission accorded to us, we, the undersigned nobles, jagirdars, talukdars, lawyers, zemindars, merchants, and others, representing a large body of the Moham-medan subjects of His Majesty the King Emperor in different parts of India, beg most respectfully to approach Your Excellency with the following address for your favourable consideration.

2. We fully realise and appreciate the incalculable benefits conferred by British rule on the teeming millions belonging to divers races and professing divers religions, who form the population of the vast continent of India; and have every reason to be grateful for the peace, security, personal freedom, and liberty of worship that we now enjoy. Further, from the wise and enlightened character of the Government, we have every reasonable ground for anticipating that these benefits will be progressive, and that India will, in the future, occupy an increasingly important position in the comity of nations.

3. One of the most important characteristics of British policy in India is the increasing deference that has, so far as possible, been paid from the first to the views and wishes of the people of the country in matters affecting their interests, with due regard always to the diversity of race and religion, which forms such an important feature of all Indian problems.

4. Beginning with the confidential and unobtrusive method of consulting influential members of important communities in different parts of the country, this principle was gradually extended by the recognition of the right of recognised political or commercial organisations to communicate to the authorities their criticisms and views on measures of public importance; and, finally, by the nomination and election of direct representatives of the people in Municipalities, District Boards, and—above all—in the Legislative Chambers of the country. This last element is, we understand, about to be dealt with by the Committee appointed by Your Excellency, with the view of giving it further extension; and it is with reference mainly to our claim to a fair share in such extended representation and some other matters of importance affecting the interests of our community that we have ventured to approach Your Excellency on the present occasion.

5. The Mohammedans of India number, according to the census taken in the year 1901, over sixty-two millions, or between one-fifth and one-fourth of the total population of His Majesty's Indian dominions; and if a reduction be made for the uncivilised portions of the community enumerated under the heads of animists and other minor religions, as well as for those classes who are ordinarily classified as Hindus, but, properly speaking, are not Hindus at all, the proportion of Mohammedans to the Hindu majority becomes much larger. We therefore desire to submit that, under any system of representation, extended or limited, a community in itself more numerous than the entire population of any first class European power, except Russia, may justly lay claim to adequate recognition as an important factor in the State. We venture, indeed, with Your Excellency's permission, to go a step further, and urge that the position accorded to the Mohammedan community in any kind of representation, direct or indirect, and in all other ways, affecting their status and influence, should be commensurate not merely with their numerical strength, but also with their political importance, and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the Empire; and we also hope that Your Excellency will, in this connection, be pleased to give due consideration to the position which they occupied in India a little more than a hundred years ago, and of which the traditions have naturally not faded from their minds.

6. The Mohammedans of India have always placed implicit reliance on the sense of justice and love of fair dealing that have characterised their rulers, and have, in consequence, abstained from pressing their claims by methods that might prove at all embarrassing; but earnestly as we desire that the Mohammedans of India should not in the future depart from

that excellent and time-honoured tradition, recent events have stirred up feelings, especially among the younger generation of Mohammedans, which might in certain circumstances and under certain contingencies, easily pass beyond the control of temperate counsel and sober guidance.

7. We, therefore, pray that the representations we herewith venture to submit, after a careful consideration of the views and wishes of a large number of our co-religionists in all parts of India, may be favoured with Your Excellency's earnest attention.

8. We hope Your Excellency will pardon our stating at the outset that representative institutions of the European type are new to the Indian people. Many of the most thoughtful members of our community, in fact, consider that the greatest care, forethought, and caution will be necessary if they are to be successfully adapted to the social, religious, and political conditions obtaining in India; and that, in the absence of such care and caution, their adoption is likely, among other evils, to place our national interests at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority. Since, however, our rulers have, in pursuance of the immemorial instincts and traditions, found it expedient to give these institutions an increasingly important place in the government of the country, we Mohammedans cannot any longer, in justice to our own national interests, hold aloof from participating in the conditions to which their policy has given rise. While, therefore, we are bound to acknowledge with gratitude that such representation as the Mohammedans of India have hitherto enjoyed has been due to a sense of justice and fairness on the part of Your Excellency and your illustrious predecessors in office, and the Heads of Local Governments by whom the Mohammedan members of Legislative Chambers have, almost without exception, been nominated, we cannot help observing that the representation thus accorded to us has necessarily been inadequate to our requirements, and has not always carried with it the approval of those whom the nominees were selected to represent. This state of things was probably, under existing circumstances, unavoidable; for while, on the one hand, the number of nominations reserved to the Viceroy and Local Governments has necessarily been strictly limited, the selection, on the other hand, of really representative men has, in the absence of any reliable method of ascertaining the direction of popular choice, been far from easy. As for the results of election, it is most unlikely that the name of any Mohammedan candidate will ever be submitted for the approval of Government by the electoral bodies as now constituted, unless he is in sympathy with the majority in all matters of importance. Nor can we, in fairness find fault with the desire of our non-Moslim fellow-subjects to take full advantage of their strength and vote only for members of their own community, or for persons who, if not Hindus, are expected to vote with the Hindu majority, on whose good-will they would have to depend for their future re-election. It is true that we have many and important interests in common with our Hindu fellow-countrymen, and it will always be a matter of the utmost satisfaction to us to see these interests safeguarded

by the presence, in our Legislative Chambers, of able supporters of these interests irrespective of their nationality. Still it cannot be denied that we Mohammedans are a distinct community with additional interests of our own, which are not shared by other communities, and these have hitherto suffered from the fact that they have not been adequately represented. Even in the provinces in which the Mohammedans constitute a distinct majority of the population, they have too often been treated as though they were inappreciably small political factors that might, without unfairness, be neglected. This has been the case, to some extent, in the Punjab; but in a more marked degree in Sind and in Eastern Bengal.

9. Before formulating our views with regard to the election of representatives, we beg to observe that the political importance of a community to a considerable extent gains strength or suffers detriment, according to the position that the members of that community occupy in the service of the State. If, as is unfortunately the case with the Mohammedans, they are not adequately represented in this manner, they lose in the prestige and influence which are justly their due. We, therefore, pray that Government will be graciously pleased to provide that, both in the gazetted and the subordinate and ministerial services of all Indian provinces, a due proportion of Mohammedans shall always find place. Orders of like import have, at times, been issued by Local Governments in some provinces, but have not unfortunately, in all cases, been strictly observed, on the ground that qualified Mohammedans were not forthcoming. This allegation, however well-founded it may have been at one time, is, we submit, no longer tenable now; and wherever the will to employ them is not wanting, the supply of qualified Mohammedans, we are happy to be able to assure Your Excellency, is equal to the demand. Since, however, the number of qualified Mohammedans has increased, a tendency is unfortunately perceptible to reject them on the ground of relatively superior qualifications having to be given precedence. This introduces something like the competitive element in its worst form, and we may be permitted to draw Your Excellency's attention to the political significance of the monopoly of all official influence by one class. We may also point out in this connection that the efforts of Mohammedan educationists have, from the very outset of the educational movement among them, been strenuously directed towards the development of character, and this, we venture to think, is of greater importance than mere mental alertness in the making of a good public servant.

10. We venture to submit that the generality of Mohammedans in all parts of India feel aggrieved that Mohammedan Judges are not more frequently appointed to the High Courts and Chief Courts of Judicature. Since the creation of these Courts, only three Mohammedan lawyers have held these honourable appointments, all of whom have full justified their elevation to the Bench. At the present moment there is not a single Mohammedan Judge sitting on the Bench of any of these Courts, while there are three Hindu Judges in the Calcutta High Court, where the pro-

portion of Mohammedans in the population is very large; and two in the Chief Court of the Punjab, where the Mohammedans form the majority of the population. It is not therefore an extravagant request on our part that a Mohammedan should be given a seat on the Bench of each of the High Courts and Chief Courts. Qualified Mohammedan lawyers eligible for these appointments can always be found, if not in one province then in another. We beg permission further to submit that the presence on the Bench of these Courts of a Judge, learned in Mohammedan law, will be a source of considerable strength to the administration of justice.

11. As Municipal and District Boards have to deal with important local interests, affecting to a great extent the health, comfort, educational needs, and even the religious concerns of the inhabitants, we shall, we hope, be pardoned if we solicit, for a moment, Your Excellency's attention to the position of Mohammedans thereon before passing to higher concerns. These institutions form, as it were, the initial rungs in the ladder of self-government, and it is here that the principle of representation is brought home intimately to the intelligence of the people. Yet the position of Mohammedans on these Boards is not at present regulated by any guiding principle capable of general application, and practice varies in different localities. The Aligarh Municipality, for example, is divided into six wards, and each ward returns one Hindu and one Mohammedan Commissioner; and the same principle, we understand, is adopted in a number of Municipalities in the Punjab and elsewhere, but in a good many places the Mohammedan tax-payers are not adequately represented. We would, therefore, respectfully suggest that local authority should, in every case, be required to declare the number of Hindus and Mohammedans entitled to seats on Municipal and District Boards, such proportion to be determined in accordance with the numerical strength, social status, local influence, and special requirements of either community. Once their relative proportion is authoritatively determined, we would suggest that either community should be allowed severally to return their own representatives, as in the practice in many towns in the Punjab.

12. We would also suggest that the Senates and Syndicates of Indian Universities might be similarly dealt with: that is to say, there should, so far as possible, be an authoritative declaration of the proportion in which Mohammedans are entitled to be represented in either body.

13. We now proceed to the consideration of the question of our representation in the Legislative Chambers of the country. Beginning with the Provincial Councils, we would most respectfully suggest that, as in the case of Municipalities and District Boards, the proportion of Mohammedan representatives entitled to a seat should be determined and declared with due regard to the important considerations which we have ventured to point out in paragraph 5 of this address; and that the important Mohammedan landowners, lawyers, merchants, and representatives of other important interests, the Mohammedan members of District Boards and

Municipalities, and the Mohammedan graduates of Universities, of a certain standing, say 5 years, should be formed into electoral colleges, and be authorised, in accordance with such rules of procedure as Your Excellency's Government may be pleased to prescribe in that behalf, to return the number of members that may be declared to be eligible.

14. With regard to the Imperial Legislative Council, whereon the due representation of Mohammedan interests is a matter of vital importance, we crave leave to suggest:

- (1) That, in the cadre of the Council, the proportion of Mohammedan representatives should not be determined on the basis of the numerical strength of the community, and that, in any case, the Mohammedan representatives should never be an ineffective minority.
- (2) That, as far as possible, appointment by election should be given preference over nomination.
- (3) That, for purposes of choosing Mohammedan members, Mohammedan landowners, lawyers, merchants, and representatives of other important interests of a status to be subsequently determined by Your Excellency's Government, Mohammedan members of the Provincial Councils and Mohammedan Fellows of Universities should be invested with electoral powers to be exercised in accordance with such procedure as may be prescribed by Your Excellency's Government in that behalf.

15. An impression has lately been gaining ground that one or more Indian Members may be appointed on the Executive Council of the Viceroy. In the event of such appointments being made, we beg that the claims of Mohammedans in that connection may not be overlooked. More than one Mohammedan, we venture to say, will be found in the country fit to serve with distinction in that august chamber.

16. We beg to approach Your Excellency on a subject which most closely affects our national welfare. We are convinced that our aspirations as a community and our future progress are largely dependent on the foundation of a Mohammedan University, which will be the centre of our religious and intellectual life. We therefore most respectfully pray that Your Excellency will take steps to help us in an undertaking in which our community is so deeply interested.

17. In conclusion, we beg to assure Your Excellency that, in assisting the Mohammedan subjects of His Majesty, at this stage in the development of Indian affairs, in the directions indicated in the present address, Your Excellency will be strengthening the basis of their unswerving loyalty to the Throne and laying the foundation of their political advancement and national prosperity, and Your Excellency's name will be remembered with gratitude by their posterity for generations to come; and we feel confident that Your Excellency will be gracious enough to give due consideration to our prayers.

*List of the Members of the Muslim Deputation
to the Viceroy on October 1, 1906*

(A) The following waited on the Viceroy:

1. His Highness Aga Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, G.C.I.E. (Bombay)
2. Shahzadah Bakhtiar Shah, O.I.E., Head of the Mysore family, Calcutta
3. Hon'ble Malik Omar Hayatt Khan, C.I.E., Lieutenant 17th Prince of Wales' Tiwana Lancers, Tiwana, Shahpur (Punjab)
4. Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Mian Mohomed Shah Din, Bar-at-Law, Lahore
5. Hon'ble Maulvi Sharfuddin, Bar-at-Law, Patna
6. Khan Bahadur Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury, Mymensingh (Eastern Bengal)
7. Nawab Bahadur Syed Amir Husain Khan, C.I.E., Calcutta
8. Naseer Hussain Khan Khyyal, Calcutta
9. Khan Bahadur Mirza Shujaat Ali Beg
10. Persian Counsel-General, Murshidabad, Calcutta (Bengal)
11. Syed Ali Imam, Bar-at-Law, Patna (Behar)
12. Nawab Sarfraz Husain Khan, Patna (Behar)
13. Khan Bahadur Ahmad Mohiuddin Khan, Stipendiary of the Carnatic family (Madras)
14. Maulvi Rafiuddin Ahmed, Bar-at-Law (Bombay)
15. Ebrahimbhoy Adamji Peerbhoy, General Merchant (Bombay)
16. Mr. Abdur Rahim, Bar-at-Law, Calcutta
17. Syed Allahdad Shah, Special Magistrate and Vice-President, Zamindars' Association, Khairpore (Sindh)
18. Maulana H. M. Malak, Head of Mehdi Bazh Bohras, Nagpur (Central Provinces)
19. Mushir-ud-Doula Mumtaz-ul-Mulk Khan Bahadur, Khalifa Syed Mohamed Hussain, Member of the State Council of Patiala (Punjab)
20. Khan Bahadur Col. Abdul Majid Khan, Foreign Minister, Patiala (Punjab)
21. Khan Bahadur Khwaja Kusuf Shah, Hony. Magistrate, Amritsar (Punjab)
22. Mian Mohomed Shafi, Bar-at-Law, Lahore (Punjab)
23. Shaikh Ghulam Sadik, Amritsar (Punjab)
24. Hakim Mohamed Ajmul Khan, Delhi (Punjab)
25. Munshi Ihtisham Ali, Zamindar and Rais, Kabori (Oudh)
26. Syed Nabi Ullah, Bar-at-Law, Rais Kara, Dist. Allahabad
27. Maulvi Syed Karamat Husain, Bar-at-Law, Allahabad
28. Syed Abdulraoof, Bar-at-Law, Allahabad
29. Munshi Abdur Salam Khan, retired sub-judge, Rampur
30. Khan Bahadur Mohamed Muzammil Ullah Khan, Zamindar, Secretary Zamindars' Association, United Provinces, and Joint Secretary, M.A.O. College Trustees, Aligarh

31. Haji Mohamed Ismail Khan, Zamindar, Aligarh
32. Sahabzadas Aftab Ahmed Khan, Bar-at-Law, Aligarh
33. Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain, Rais Amroha, United Provinces
34. Maulvi Habibul Rahaman Khan, Zamindar, Bhikhanpur, United Provinces
35. Nawab Syed Sirdar Ali Khan, son of the late Nawab Sirdar Diler-ul-Mulk Bahadur, C.I.E., Hyderabad (Deccan)
36. Maulvi Syed Mahdee Ally Khan (Muhsin-ul-Mulk), Hony. Secretary M.A.O. College, Aligarh, Etawah, United Provinces

(B) The following intended to be present on the occasion but were prevented by illness or other cause:

1. Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Salimulla Nawab of Dacca
2. Hon'ble Nawab Haji Mohamed Fateh Ali Khan Qazelbash, Lahore
3. Hon'ble Syed Zainul, Edrosl Surat
4. Khan Bahadur Kasim Mir Ghayasuddin Peerzadah of Broach
5. Khan Bahadur Raja Jahandad of Hazara
6. Shaikh Shahid Hussain of Lucknow

LORD MINTO'S REPLY

Allow me, before I attempt to reply to the many considerations your address embodies, to welcome you heartily to Simla.

Your presence here today is very full of meaning. To the document with which you have presented me are attached the signatures of nobles, of ministers of various States, of great landowners, of lawyers, of merchants, and of many other of His Majesty's Mohammedan subjects. I welcome the representative character of your Deputation as expressing the views and aspirations of the enlightened Moslim community of India. I feel that all you have said emanates from a representative body, basing its opinions on a matured consideration of the existing political conditions of India, totally apart from the small portion or political sympathies and antipathies of scattered localities; and I am grateful to you for the opportunity you are affording me of expressing my appreciation of the just aims of the followers of Islam and their determination to share in the political history of our Empire.

As your Viceroy, I am proud of the recognition you express of the benefits conferred by British rule on the diverse races of many creeds who go to form the population of this huge continent. You yourselves, the decendants of a conquering and ruling race, have told me today of your gratitude for the personal freedom, the liberty of worship, the general peace, and the hopeful future which British administration has secured for India.

It is interesting to look back on early British efforts to assist the Mohammedan population to qualify themselves for public service. In 1782 Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrassah with the intention of enabling its students "to compete on more equal terms with the Hindus for employment under Government". In 1811, my ancestor, Lord Minto, advocated improvements in the Madrassah and the establishment of Mohammedan

colleges at other places throughout India. In later years, the efforts of the Mohammedan Association led to the Government Resolution of 1885, dealing with the educational position of the Mohammedan community and their employment in the public service whilst Mohammedan educational effort has culminated in the College of Aligarh, that great institution which the noble and broadminded devotion of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan has dedicated to his co-religionists. It was in July 1877 that Lord Lytton laid the foundation stone of Aligarh, when Sir Syed Ahmed Khan addressed these memorable words to the Viceroy:

The personal honour which you have done me assures me of a great fact, and fills me with feelings of a much higher nature than mere personal gratitude. I am assured that you, who upon this occasion represent the British rule, have sympathies with our labours, and to me this assurance is very valuable, and a source of great happiness. At my time of life it is a comfort to me to feel that the undertaking which has been for many years, and is now, the sole object of my life, has roused, on the one hand, the energies of my own countrymen, and, on the other, has won the sympathy of our British fellow-subjects and the support of our rulers; so that when the few years I may still be spared are over, and when I shall be no longer amongst you, the college will still prosper, and succeed in educating my countrymen to have the same affection for their country, the same feelings of loyalty for the British rule, the same appreciation of its blessings, the same sincerity of friendship with our British fellow-subjects, as have been the ruling feelings of my life.

Aligarh has won its laurels. Its students have gone forth to fight the battle of life strong in the tenets of their own religion, strong in the precepts of loyalty and patriotism, and now, when there is much that is critical in the political future of India, the inspiration of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the teachings of Aligarh shine forth brilliantly in the pride of Mohammedan history, in the loyalty, commonsense, and sound reasoning so eloquently expressed in your address.

But, Gentlemen, you go on to tell me that sincere as your belief is in the justice and fair dealing of your rulers and unwilling as you are to embarrass them at the present moment, you cannot but be aware that "recent events" have stirred up feelings amongst the younger generation of Mohammedans which might "pass beyond the control of temperate counsel and sober guidance". Now I have no intention of entering into any discussion upon the affairs of Eastern Bengal and Assam, yet I hope that, without offence to anyone, I may thank the Mohammedan community of the new province for the moderation and self-restraint they have shown under conditions which were new to them, and as to which there has been inevitably much misunderstanding, and that I may at the same time sympathize with all that is sincere in Bengali sentiment. But above all, what I would ask you to believe is that the course the Viceroy and the Government of India have pursued in connection with the affairs of the new Province, the future of which is now assured, has been dictated solely by a regard for what has appeared best for its present and future populations as a whole, irrespec-

tive of race or creed; and that the Mohammedan community of Eastern Bengal and Assam can rely as firmly as ever on British justice and fair-play for the appreciation of its loyalty and the safe-guarding of its interests.

You have addressed me, gentlemen, at a time when the political atmosphere is full of change. We all feel it. It would be foolish to attempt to deny its existence. Hopes and ambitions new to India are making themselves felt. We cannot ignore them. We should be wrong to wish to do so. But to what is all this unrest due? Not to the discontent of misgoverned millions, I defy anyone honestly to assert that; not to any uprising of a disaffected people; it is due to that educational growth in which only a very small portion of the population has as yet shared, of which British rule first sowed the seed, and the fruits of which British rule is now doing its best to foster and to direct. There may be many tares in the harvest we are now reaping; the Western grain which we have sown may not be entirely suitable to the requirements of the people of India, but the educational harvest will increase as years go on, and the healthiness of the nourishment it gives will depend on the careful administration and distribution of its products.

You need not ask my pardon, Gentlemen, for telling me that "representative institutions of the European type are entirely new to the people of India", or that their introduction here requires the most earnest thought and care. I should be very far from welcoming all the political machinery of the Western world amongst the hereditary instincts and traditions of Eastern races. Western breadth of thought, the teachings of Western civilisation, the freedom of British individuality can do much for the people of India. But I recognise with you that they must not carry with them an impracticable insistence on the acceptance of political methods.

And now, Gentlemen, I come to your own position in respect to the political future—the position of the Mohammedan community for whom you speak.

You will, I feel sure, recognise that it is impossible for me to follow you through any detailed consideration of the conditions and the share that community has a right to claim in the administration of public affairs. I can at present only deal with generalities. The points which you have raised are before the Committee which, as you know, I have lately appointed to consider the question of representation, and I will take care that your address is submitted to them. But at the same time I hope I may be able to reply to the general tenor of your remarks without in any way forestalling the Committee's report.

The pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that, in any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipality, a District Board, or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the Mohammedan community should be represented as a community. You point out that in many cases electoral bodies as now constituted cannot be expected to return a Mohammedan candidate, and that, if by chance they did so, it could only be at the sacrifice of such a candidate's views to those of a majority opposed to his

own community, whom he would in no way represent, and you justly claim that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength, but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service it has rendered to the Empire. I am entirely in accord with you. Please do not misunderstand me; I make no attempt to indicate by what means the representation of communities can be obtained, but I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be, that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent. The great mass of the people of India have no knowledge of representative institutions, I agree with you, Gentlemen, that the initial rungs in the ladder of self-government are to be found in the Municipal and District Boards, and that it is in that direction that we must look for the gradual political education of the people. In the meantime I can only say to you that the Mohammedan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded in any administrative reorganisation with which I am concerned, and that you and the people of India may rely upon the British Raj to respect, as it has been its pride to do, the religious beliefs and the national traditions of the myriads composing the population of His Majesty's Indian Empire.

Muslim All-India Confederacy: Nawab of Dacca's Scheme

The Nawab of Dacca being unable to take part in the deputation which waited on the Viceroy on October 1, 1906 sent a memorandum to his co-religionists suggesting the formation of an All-India Association to safeguard Muslim interests. This was discussed by the delegates at Simla and met with considerable favour. The Nawab later elaborated his suggestions in anticipation of the conference which met afterwards at Dacca during Xmas week and published them in the form of a memorandum from which the following extracts are made:

I am aware of several instances wherein untold mischief has occurred through irresponsible Muhammadan gentlemen, and Associations sprung up and created by some (who really at heart have no regard for our community) for the sole purpose of establishing their own political importance addressing Government and the public without any one to question their right to do so. While of course Government cannot refuse to receive any representation from any corporate body or individual, however distinguished they or he may be, yet such representation fails to carry weight owing to the authorities not knowing how far the views

contained therein are consonant with the views of the Muhammadan community as a whole. If there were an All-India Association of the kind I propose, Government will be able to refer to it all such representations which may be received by the authorities to ascertain the views of the community in general being finally passing order thereon, and there will then be no danger of any party or parties misrepresenting facts to serve individual interests.

(A) AIMS AND OBJECTS

It is absolutely necessary that the aims and objects of this Association should be definitely stated. And although I am sure I shall not receive the hearty support of some of my co-religionists, yet I for one honestly believe that the time has come when, if the Association is to be a force and powerful good, it must at the very outset lay down its policy and objects, and I will do so as follows:

That the sole object and purpose of the Association shall be to, whenever possible, support all measures emanating from the Government and to protect the cause and advance the interest of our co-religionists throughout the country. (a) To contravert the growing influence of the so called Indian National Congress, which has a tendency to misinterpret and subvert the British rule in India or which may lead to that deplorable situation, and (b) To enable our young men of education, who for want of such an Association have joined the Congress camp, to find scope, on account of their fitness and ability, for public life.

(B) CONSTITUTION

As regards its constitution the following suggestions were made:

The Confederacy shall consist of patrons, life members and members, and its administrative body shall consist of a Council, of a President, six Vice-Presidents and a working committee of the thirty members, two Secretaries and a Treasurer, the Council to be appointed every year, the gentlemen retiring being eligible for re-election.

	<i>Per Annum</i>
	<i>Rs.</i>
The fee to be declared a Patron shall be	1,000
The fee to be declared a Life Member	100
The fee to be declared a Member	10
The fee for holding an office other than that of President or Secretary	30

I have no objection to the number of the Vice-Presidents or of the committee being increased, but I think the number I have given will be a thoroughly working body. I think we may safely count not only a hundred but quite two hundred if not more who will gladly for the sake of Islam become the Patrons of the Society. It is also proposed that the Confederacy as above formed shall be the supreme authority to adjudicate and decide any dispute and misunderstanding occurring or arising in any of its recognised associations.

There was a further suggestion that 25% of the annual rent income of all recognised associations should be placed at the disposal and for the purpose and object of the Confederacy, and the Nawab pointed out that this "will be a source of income which no association can grumble at, for its contribution only adds to the resources of the Confederacy the aims and objects of which are the same as those of the association in itself."

The Confederacy was supposed to carry on its work somewhat on the lines of the various Chambers of Commerce, the British Indian Association, etc., etc. Its Executive Council during the course of the year was to have the authority to address Government and Public bodies on all questions of paramount interest to the country and particularly those affecting the Muhammadan community. It was also to explain to the people when necessary through the recognised associations measures of Government affecting the welfare of the country. Moreover it was to take every step to advance the moral and material interests affecting the prosperity of the Muhammadan community and particularly to bring into prominence fully educated and other, otherwise highly qualified, young Muhammadans of promise and ability. At its annual meeting the President was to deliver the address on the year's work.

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